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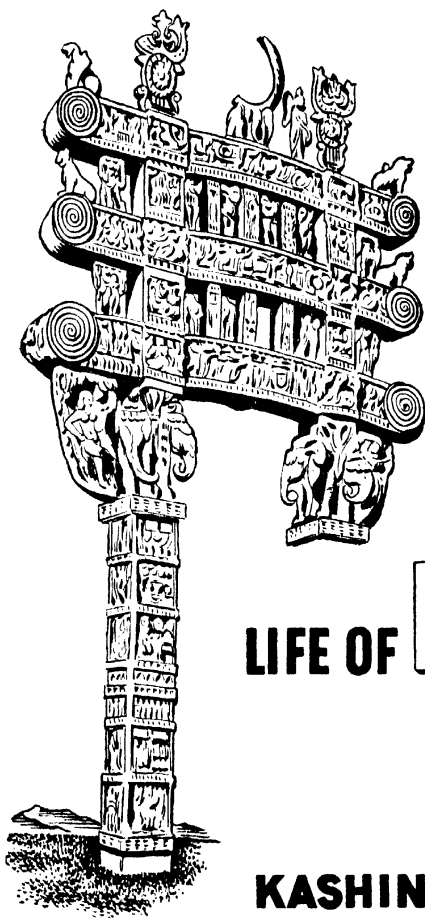
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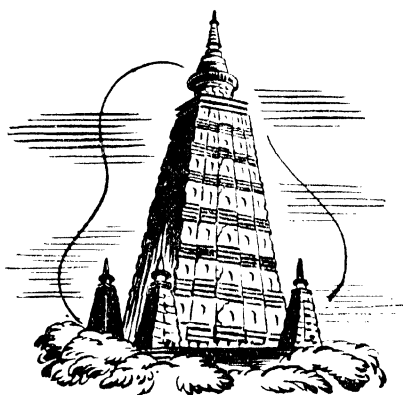
LIFE OF BUDDHA

KASHINATH



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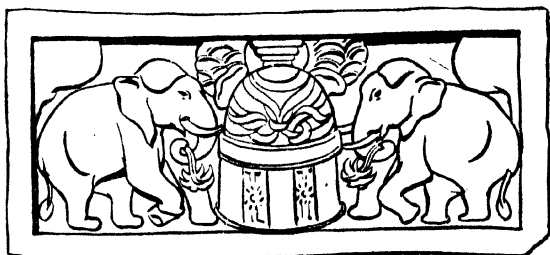
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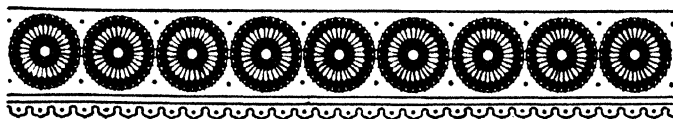




In the winter of 1954, I accidentally ran into a French Buddha Bhikshu on the Jaku hill at Simla. Snow was falling incessantly. We took shelter in a temple. There, the said Bhikshu sowed curiosity in my mind regarding Gautam Buddha and Buddhism, by reciting some memorable verses from 'The Light of Asia' by Edwin Arnold. "Your country is great. Tathagata was born in this land 2500 years ago. Gandhi also was born in the same country.... You are doubly blessed!!" the Bhikshu said.

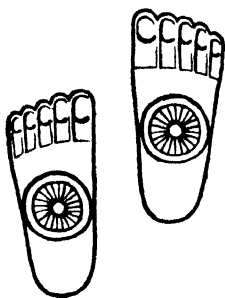
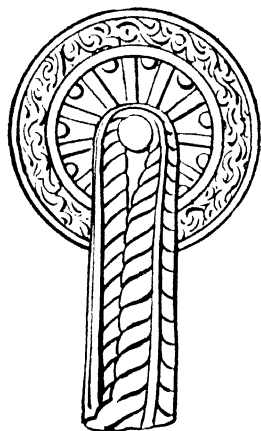
These words were resounding in my ears for many days. After this meeting I read several books on Buddha; collected information by visiting Viharas. I also got opportunity to have discussions with persons like Dr B. R. Ambedkar, Shri Dadasaheb Pataskar, the Minister for Law and Shri P. M. Lad, I.C.S. I must express my gratitude for their kindness. I have written this book on the eve of Buddha Jayanti, especially for students.

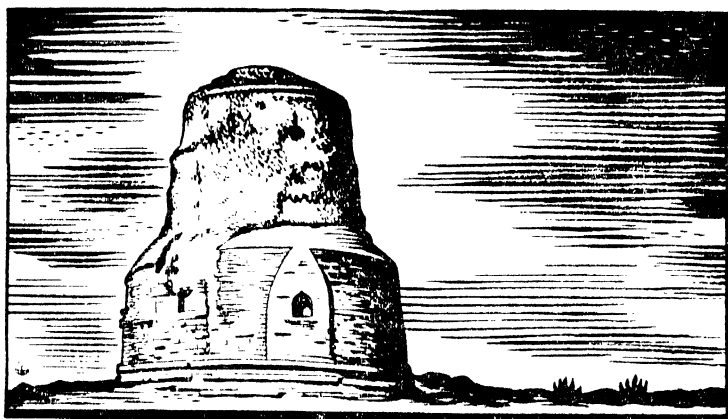
KASHINATH



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Nature was Blessed



White peaks of the Himalayas glittered like mirrors. Streams leapt from the mountain-caves with gay abandon. Sunrays painted the whole nature with gold. Trees and creepers swayed rhythmically. Nature blossomed with corn, fruit and flowers. Birds began to chant *Sama-veda*. News of the Prince's birth was instantly carried everywhere by the wind. Temples began



People erected banners

to hum with prayers. People erected banners. The child was named *Siddhartha* because the long cherished hopes and aspirations of the king, the queen and their subjects were fulfilled by his birth. Nature was blessed !

The name of *Siddhartha's* father was *Shuddhodan*, mother's name was *Maya* and the name of the family was *Gautam*. *Shuddhodan* means pure rice. From this it is inferred that *Siddhartha* was born in the family of an agriculturist. *Shuddhodan* was not a great king. His *Shakya* ancestors had acquired a small principality as a favour for helping the neighbouring emperors in wars. *Shuddhodan* increased it with his prowess. *Shuddhodan* was known for his character and bravery. *Koshala*, *Magadha* (South Bihar of today), and *Videha* (North Bihar of today) were the foremost states of that time. *Ayodhya*, *Rajaga* and *Mithila* were their respective capitals. Compared with them, *Kapilavastu* — the capital of *Shuddhodan* was a small and insignificant town.

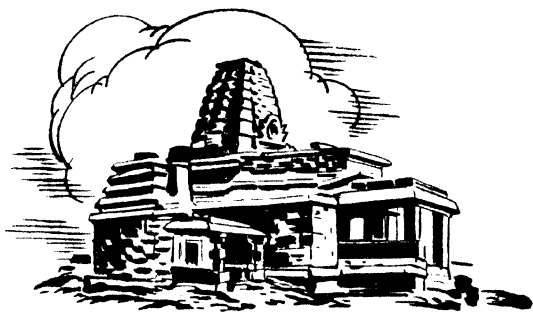
But because of his generous patronage there used to be a constant stream of learned men and artists towards this town which was nearly a hundred miles to the north of Kashi. This Shakya state had comprised an area of nine hundred square miles and nearly half a million subjects. The main river in this area was Rohini. Ganga was also nearby.

The Aryas and the Mongols settled at the foot of the Himalayas in the Sixth Century B.C. From there they descended in the Ganga Valley. The streams of culture spread along the flow of the rivers. Some historians hold that Shakya and Lichhavi races were originally Mongolian. There are also differences, of opinion regarding the exact birth-date of Siddhartha. However, generally speaking, he might have been born in the year 563 B.C. His place of birth is believed to be Lumbini forest in Nepaltarai. For many years this place also was unknown. Emperor Ashoka discovered it and erected a column there in the year 244 B.C. Relics of this column are still seen there.

The name of Buddha has been resounding in this country throughout the last twenty-five hundred years. The child of Vasudev-Devaki happened to come to the house of Nanda-

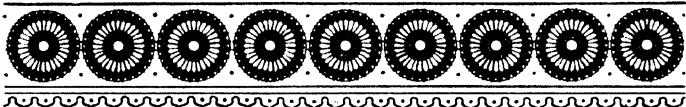
★ ★ ★ ★ *Nature was Blessed* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Yashoda and was brought up by them; similarly, the Bouddha religion established by Siddhartha has been spreading outside Bharat, in the countries of South-East Asia, from Tibet to Japan and in the South in Ceylon. The banner of Bouddha religion was waving for twelve hundred years from the birth of Siddhartha. It is maintained that Buddha inaugurated a new era in Bharat. Influence of this era is felt even today. How did Siddhartha become a Buddha? It is history worth pondering over.



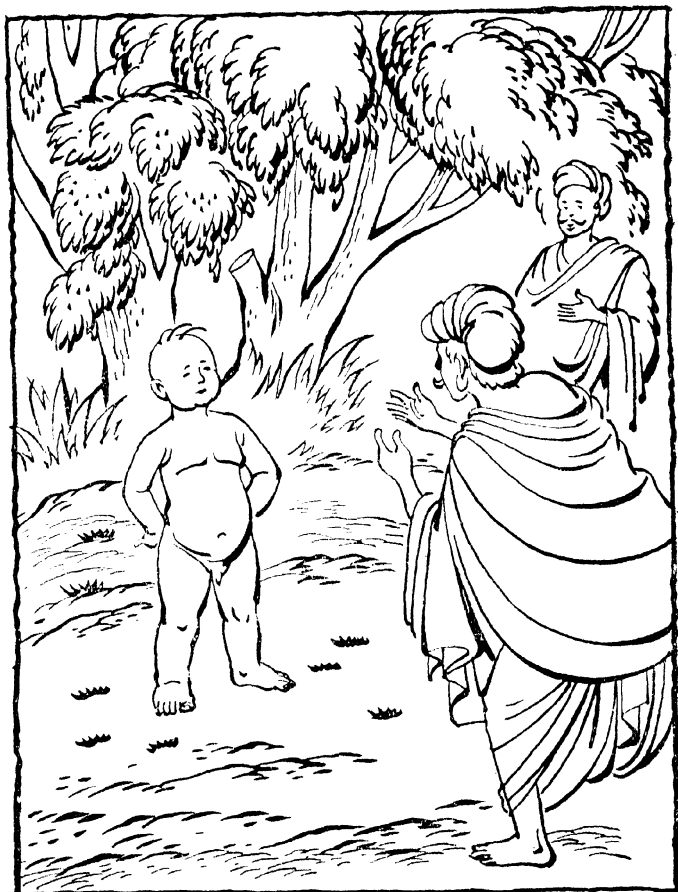


Aura of Miracles



There is always created an aura of miracles around the lives of great men. In Bouddha religious books there are such romantic narrations regarding Buddha. For example, read this description about his birth :

The queen Maya was proceeding to her father's house, in a palanquin. The days of her confinement were drawing nearer. In order that



The new-born child stood erect on the ground.

the queen may not be put to the least inconvenience or trouble, the king had all the roads cleared and levelled. Resting houses were erected at various places. Special precaution was taken that the queen may not happen to see any shocking sight, any ugly person or any sad and miserable creature. The palanquin bearing the queen stopped as it reached Lumbini forest. The queen was delighted to see that enchanting spot. She sat underneath a Saal tree. The tree blossomed with leaves and flowers as soon as the queen touched it. The rippling streams nearby swelled up with more water. The trees and the creepers bowed down to salute the queen. And that very moment the queen gave birth to her son, without experiencing any trouble or pain. Gods in heaven showered the infant with flowers. The surprising thing was that the newborn child slipped out of the hands of the servants and stood erect on the ground. It walked a few steps in each of the four directions and saw the whole world in full. After that the infant walked seven steps in the air and announced, "This is my last birth." At that time all the misery and poverty of all the diseased, sad, weak and miserable creatures in the world vanished and there was joy everywhere.



The King was astonished....

The king came to Lumbini forest as soon as he received the news of his son's birth. He was astonished to see the amazing lustre of his son's face. As soon as he returned to Kapilavastu he summoned all the Royal astrologers and learned men. All were amazed to see the lustre of the child. One old sage by name Asit declared that the child possessed all the thirty-two signs found in great men. So saying, he stepped forward and saluted the child. Streams of tears flowed from his eyes as he stood looking at the face of the child. The king and the queen became apprehensive to see this.

"Sir, I hope you have not perceived any-

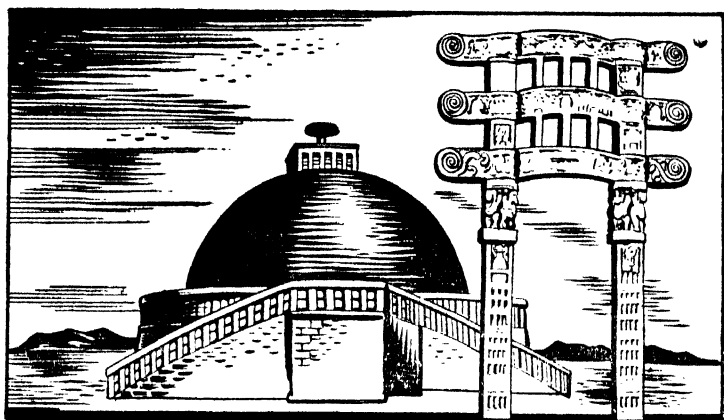
thing inauspicious?" The king asked with much concern.

"No, Shuddhodan, do not be so frightened. I am weeping not because I have perceived any inauspicious sign in this infant but I am sad because of my misfortune. Your son will become a Buddha and will show to the world the path of salvation. But I will not be alive at that time. This is my misfortune."

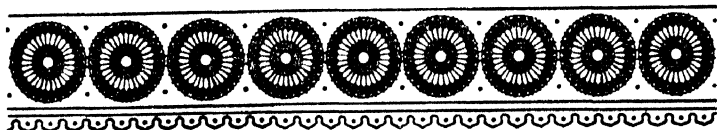
All the persons including the king and the queen became astonished by these words of the old sage and by the miraculous events in the life of their child from the beginning. The astonishment was still more increased when the queen narrated her dream to the assembled persons.



"No, Shuddhodan, do not be so frightened."

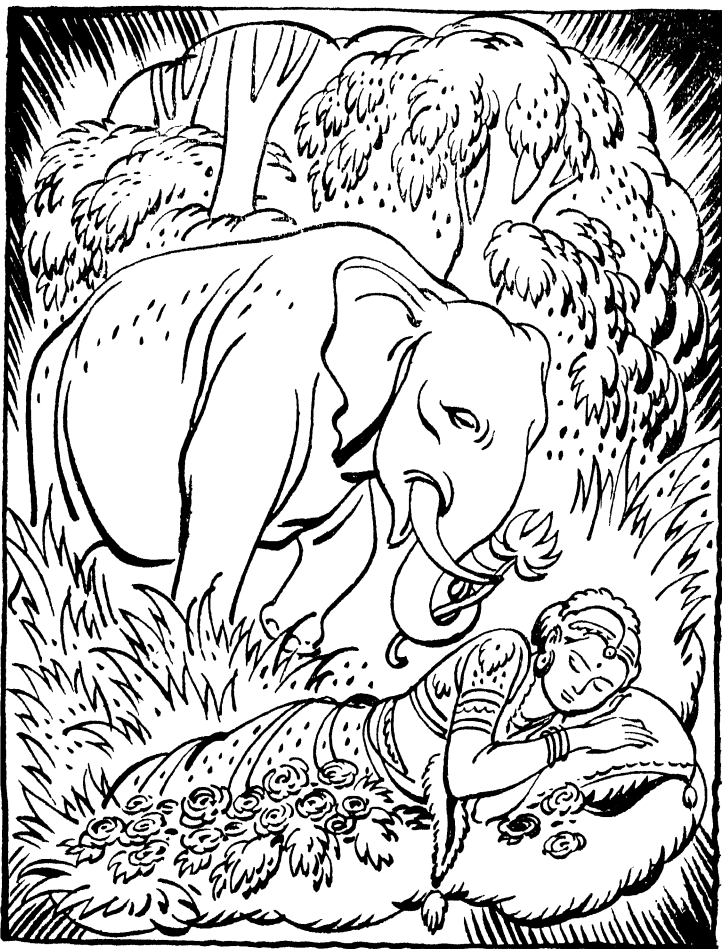


Maya's Vision



One night Queen Maya was sitting near the window of her apartment looking at the beauty of the moonlight outside. It was full moon in spring. The line of distant snow-clad mountains looked like the Milky Way. Night, clad in white apparel, was scattering perfume. One ripple of wind came from the white mountain and sprayed scent on the face of the queen.

Maya's eyelids became heavy. Her senses became numb. Slowly before her eyes a dream began to unfold. Four Yakshas lifted her divan and placed it on a lofty snow-clad mountain-top. There was one mighty tree standing nearby. The tree had flowers of many colours. Four Apsaras led the queen to a crystal-like lake. The queen was afraid to see the turbulence of the lake. But as soon as she touched the water with her foot, it became quite calm. On bathing in that lake the complexion of the queen became clear and began to shine like gold. After the bath, the queen wore the clothes and ornaments given her by the Apsaras and went to the white palace. There she reclined on the bed strewn with heavenly flowers of various colours and perfumes. In front of her was one mountain of gold and on that, one snow-white elephant was roaming about. The elephant held in his trunk one full-blown moon-lotus. This elephant approached the queen and struck lightly with the lotus, the right part of the queen's body. Instantly the elephant was turned into a small cloud of vapour. This cloud entered the belly of the queen. It was dawn when the queen woke up. Birds had begun to chirp. The sky was slightly tinted with red in the east and the chants of prayer were coming from a distance.

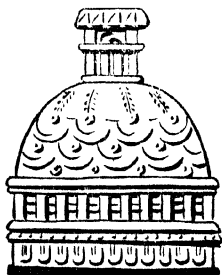


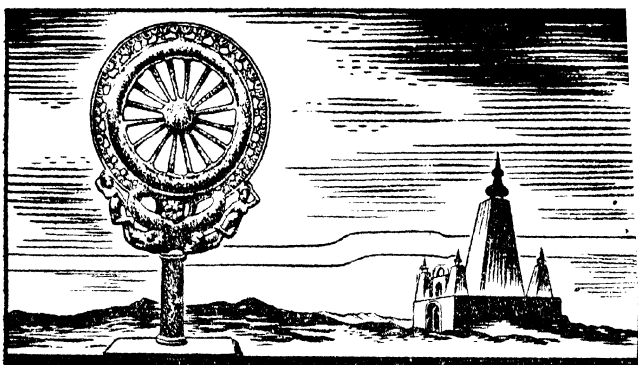
The elephant struck with lotus the right side of the Queen's body.

* * * * * *My Son will become Emperor* * * * *

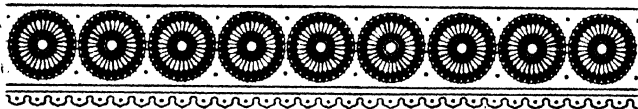
At hearing this narration of the mysterious dream from the queen every learned man, astrologer and priest present there began to discover its meaning. All were agreed that this dream is auspicious and the child born to the queen is not an ordinary child. One old priest said, "Either this child will become an Emperor or will become a Buddha — The Saviour of the world. If this child sees an old man, a diseased man, a corpse and a yogi consecutively, he will renounce the worldly possessions and go to the forest in search of truth. If not, he will be a king of the whole land from Himalayas to the Setu and will become a mighty conqueror."

Hearing this, Shuddhodan became lost in thought. After some time he said, "We are Kshatriyas. We like going to the battlefield better than going to the forest. My son will become the Emperor — I will make him one."





Inner Conflict



With the birth of Siddhartha there was a transformation of Kapilavastu in all respects. Nature blessed that valley particularly. Paddy crop was increased several times. Markets were full with flowers and fruits. People attributed this to the advent of the prince and blessed him for it. Maya, however, left the world when Siddhartha was but seven days old. She handed over the child to her sister and the younger queen, Mahaprajapati Gautami. The latter on

her part brought up Siddhartha with love. The king, on his part, kept him away from the draughts of miseries of this world.

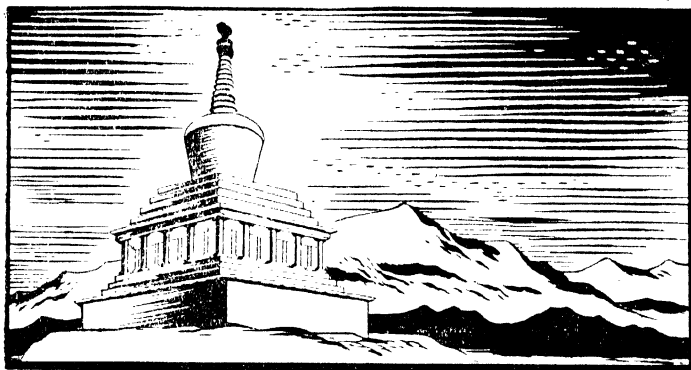
Under the canopy of the blue sky of Nepal-tarai, in the vicinity of the Himalayas, in the deep groves of oak, saal, cypress and pine trees, in the paddy fields of the mountain slopes, with the flow of rivers like Rohini, Acharavati and others, Siddhartha spent his childhood. In the summer the streams of snow-rivers poured down from the mountain-caves like the stream of Ganga from the matted locks of Shankar's hair. The snow-clad mountain-tops turned into skeletons by the arrows of the sun's rays. In the valley there hummed new music. With the advent of spring there was new colour on the cheeks of nature. In the rainy season there was green everywhere. In winter every thing was strewn with designs of white powder. There was snow everywhere on the leaves of the trees, on the housetops, and on the mountain-tops. Snow-like tiny rice grains, like powdered mica, like small feathers, used to settle lightly. Siddhartha was going round this wheel of seasons. Sometimes he used to be meditative and the wheel of ultimate mystery of nature, of birth and death used to revolve before him. Sometimes, while playing with his friends, he used to go away alone



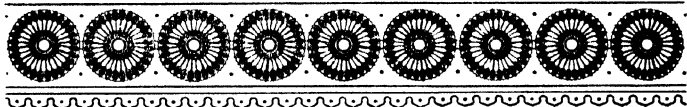
Sometimes he left his friends in play and went alone.

leaving the game unfinished. He used to be meditative for hours on end. The king on his part was providing Siddhartha with all the pleasures. He could not understand why Siddhartha was sad inspite of this. Siddhartha himself told his disciples later that his childhood was passed in extreme happiness from the worldly point of view. He used to wear silken garments, eat rich food, his servants used to hold an umbrella over his head all the time. He did not know heat of the sun, wind, and ups and downs of happiness and unhappiness. 'But still rooted deep in my heart somewhere there was unhappiness.'

As Siddhartha grew older, the lustre of his beauty also increased. He studied Vedas and Upanishads. It is said that even his preceptor Vishwamitra was astonished to see his knowledge and talent. But Siddhartha did not express the pain in his heart even before Vishwamitra. The black-bee of the quest for truth might have just begun to dig his mind.



Meeting of Shiva and Shakti



In order to dispel the sadness of Siddhartha, Shuddhodan summoned his court. He invited hundreds of kings and knights to be present with their daughters. He decided to imprison Siddhartha in the cage of gold.

The court was full of beautiful princesses even as the stars cluster the sky. It was, as if, a

living exhibition of garments of different colours, flowers of various perfumes, of different styles of wearing clothes and adorning hair, of different revelations of beauty. As the fame of the prince Shiddhartha was known to everybody, in the mind of each princess there was a sprout of hidden aspiration.

In the middle of the court, to the right hand of the king, was seated Siddhartha on a throne of gold. Even jewels must have blushed by the splendour of his complexion. All eyes were centred on this handsome youth with broad forehead, straight nose, lustrous eyes, hands like the half opened buds of lotus and a sweet smile. As soon as the ceremony began each princess began to approach Siddhartha. Siddhartha did not even look at any one of them by lifting his head. Every princess turned away from him after accepting a gift of jewels from him in her trembling hands. All were overshadowed by his splendour. Finally, Yashodhara approached him. All began to look at this princess who was delicate like a Parijat flower, cool like the moonlight and beautiful like a celestial damsel. She came near the seat of Siddhartha with slow steps. She looked at him with unfaltering and fearless eyes. At the same moment Siddhartha also lifted his head. Heart read the sign of heart.

Yashodhara was the daughter of a great warrior. She thought to herself : Is this handsome prince also brave ? Have his delicate arms the power to destroy the enemies ? Her father would never have consented to their marriage without putting the prince to this test.

When Yashodhara came near Siddhartha, all the jewels with him had been distributed. His hands were now empty. But he had bestowed upon Yashodhara his life itself. However, as a matter of formality, he unclasped the jewel-necklace hanging round his neck and wound it round the wrist of Yashodhara. Siddhartha had announced his choice.

Now was the turn of Yashodhara's father. He arranged for the Swayamvara of his daughter. He announced that Yashodhara would accept as her husband only the most brave of the archers. Shuddhodana was worried. He wondered whether his delicate and handsome son would hold out against his competitors. If he is defeated ? Yashodhara also trembled with this apprehension. But before her mind's eye stood the figure of handsome Rama who playfully broke the bow of Shiva and also the pride of Ravana. She was convinced that even though Siddhartha looked young and delicate as com-

pared to others, he possessed uncommon power. She had accepted him in the heart of her hearts, and now she was praying for his success.

One by one the princes entered the arena with challenge. The whole atmosphere resounded with twangs of bows, booms of the conches and the cries of victory. But Siddhartha was as calm as the ocean. When he was astride his white horse, all eyes were turned on him. He shone like sun when he entered the battlefield. Many princes recoiled from him at

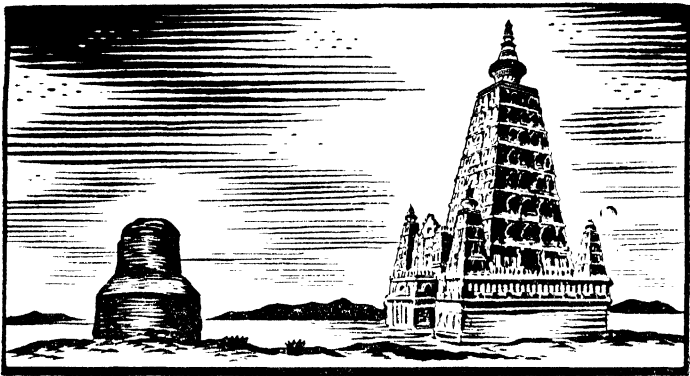


Siddhartha brought him down with his very first arrow.

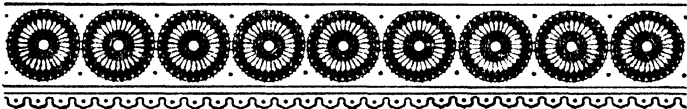
the very first encounter. Devadatta, the cousin of Siddhartha, charged him with rage. He believed that Siddhartha, who used to cry with pain when a swan was shot, will not hold out against him. But Siddhartha toppled him down to the feet of his horse, with his very first arrow. Shuddhodan was overjoyed. Tears of happiness streamed down from the eyes of Yashodhara.

After test of weapons was over, Siddhartha gave an exhibition of the miracle of carriages. His horse Kankak was running with the speed of the wind. The wheels of the chariot were hardly touching the ground. Thousands of throats lustily cheered Siddhartha.

Peoples' happiness knew no bounds when Siddhartha and Yashodhara came face to face for getting married. It was, as it were, the union of sun and moon ; a meeting of Shiva and Shakti who loved each other for ages. At the time of marriage Siddhartha was only sixteen years old and Yashodhara thirteen.



Thorn of the Rose



Siddhartha and Yashodhara were deeply in love with each other. In the heart of Siddhartha there was softness of a woman and delicacy to turn buds into flowers. Their time flew swiftly with happiness. Yashodhara used to feel a pinch of this happiness. She felt that Siddhartha should sometimes get angry with her, order her about, allow her to serve him, behave with her as her

lord. But Siddhartha used to give her only love—unbounded love, pure love. No bad word or angry word ever left his mouth. He used to protect her and look after her with all his life. But many times he used to forget her totally. While in the bonds of her love he seemed far away like a star. While looking at Yashodhara, his eyes used to see a new universe unfolding in his own heart. His attitude was like “water drops on the leaf of a lotus.” For hours on end, sometimes, he was unconscious of everything. His soul, as it were, used to leave his body and wander in the space. Yashodhara’s mind used to become distressed with the apprehension that her husband was sulky because of her fault. She tried to bind Siddhartha with the silken chords of her love, youth and beauty. But she did not know that her husband was a free soul.

Some days passed like this. Then there was a change in Siddhartha. He began to pass more of his time with Yashodhara. He began to look after her likes and dislikes, to help unfold every petal of her heart. Both were laughing, dancing and running about. With their laughter there was a transformation of Nature. Yashodhara also underwent a transformation. Her body was blossoming. In her dream-world she used to see new miracles. She now felt the existence of

Siddhartha in her own body. The king Shuddhodan and the queen Mahaprajapati were immersed in happiness. All were pleased to see this free bird trapped in a cage, at last !

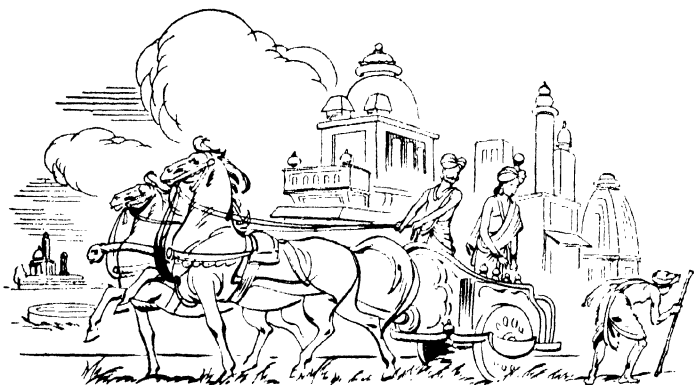
Siddhartha began to look after the affairs of the state too. He began to help Shuddhodan in the dispensation of justice. The burden of the king was lessened to a great extent. While the king was happy with the thought that at last his son had come out of his stupor, now he would look after the state and would become an emperor, one day his hand was pricked with a thorn in his rosy dream-world.

One day Siddhartha approached the king and expressed his desire to have a round in the city. Now the king saw no risk in it, because according to him Siddhartha was now fully engrossed in his family-life. Shuddhodan willingly gave his consent. All the city of Kapilavastu was cleaned and adorned. The king gave an order that no unhappiness and misery should come to the sight of Siddhartha and therefore only the youthful men and women should come out on the streets laughing and dancing. The next day, the king sent Siddhartha out with Channa, his special charioteer with specific instructions. As the golden chariot of Sid-

dhārtha was proceeding along the streets of the city, the people were showering flowers on it. The sky was resounding with cheers and welcome songs. Siddhartha also became happy noticing the expression of joy of his subjects. He said to himself : " Really, the whole world is beautiful ! How happy ! ! " As these thoughts were in his mind, nobody knew from where, a very old man appeared in front of him. Time had scarred his body with its strokes. His rags were tattered. His hands and feet were trembling. His head was lolling. He was walking somehow with the help of his staff. The sweet dream of everybody broke as the heated glass breaks with the touch of cold water.

" Channa, are men sometimes so ugly and disgusting ? " Siddhartha asked with childlike innocence.

Channa shivered, became confused. He did not know what to reply. Some supernatural power must have compelled him to speak out. The dark side of life which the king Shuddhodan had hidden from Siddhartha with great efforts, now stood revealed before him. Channa thought that some supernatural power must have assumed the form of an old man and appeared before him to reveal truth to Siddhartha. So thinking, he said, " Prince, he is an



The old man was walking somehow with the help of his staff.
old man. In his youth, he also was handsome."

Siddhartha : "Then, all persons become so old and so ugly ?"

Channa — "Yes Sir ! All persons become like it."

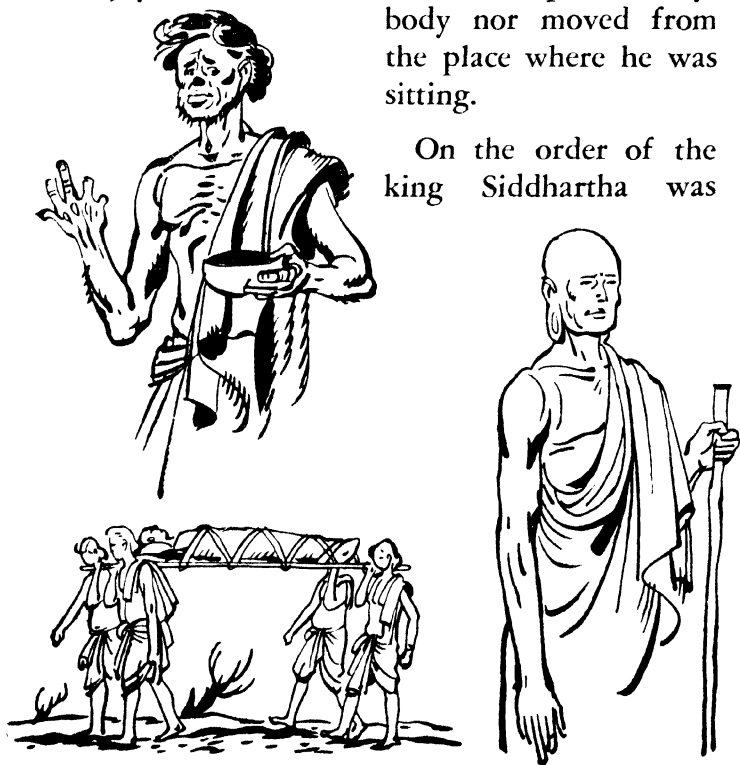
Siddhartha — "Then Channa, life is not beautiful only. I do not feel happy about it. Come on, turn back the chariot."

When the chariot of Siddhartha entered the precincts of the palace the face of Channa was hanging down. As the sun had gone behind the clouds, there was darkness even though it was noon. The face of Siddhartha was also clouded. He went to his apartment all alone and sat there for a long time, lost in thought. As soon as the King Shuddhodan, the Queen Mahaprajapati and

* * * * *Thorn of the Rose* * * * * *

Yashodhara came to know about this incident, they felt very sad. The king hurriedly went to his son and tried to console him. But the wound in the heart of Siddhartha was too deep for it. The chord of his heart's harp was snapped. His joy had vanished. He neither spoke to anybody nor moved from the place where he was sitting.

On the order of the king Siddhartha was



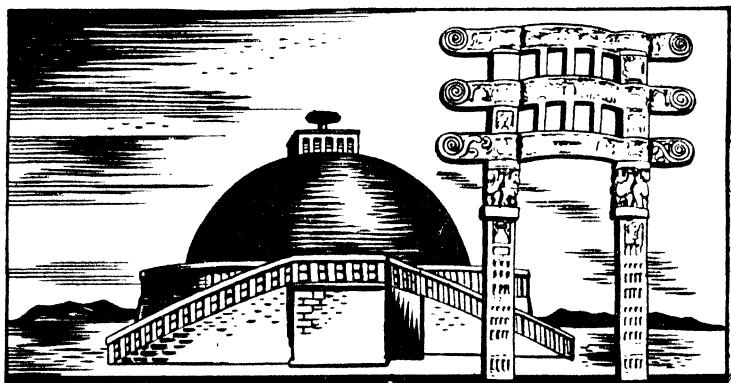
A diseased man, a corpse and a Yogi went past Siddhartha.

again taken into the city. This time the king had taken precautions personally. But what was to happen, happened. One diseased man, one corpse and one yogi went past Siddhartha, one after another.

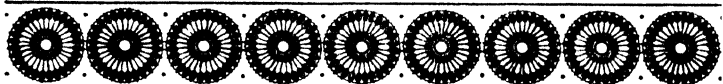
"Channa, does everybody have to die?" Siddhartha asked.

"Yes, Prince, whoever is born has to die," Channa replied.

Again the heart of Siddhartha was wounded. For the first time in his life he became angry with his father, on returning home. "You kept me in false belief. You erected around me walls of false happiness. I had begun to feel that life is nothing but happiness, beauty and youth. But that was a mirage. Now I have come to know both the sides of life. Now I will search for eternal happiness and truth." Siddhartha thundered. In his eyes there was burning fire. The king became frightened to see this new Siddhartha. He remembered the prophecy of the Royal astrologer.



The Free Soul in Bondage



There is joy in the palace. The notes of music have filled the atmosphere. The anklets of the dancing girls are tinkling, perfumes of attars have filled the air, bells are ringing in the temples, the sky is resounding with the sounds of conches and trumpets, the big chandeliers in the palace-halls have put to shame the light of the stars, the heaven has descended to earth, as it

were. There is one topic on the lips of every person : A son is born to Siddhartha.

The king, the queen, the ministers, the subjects, all were overjoyed. The face of Yashodhara was shining with contentment. But Siddhartha ? He was pacing alone in the garden in the shadows of the trees. His inner conflict had become more acute.



He was pacing alone in the garden in the shadows of the trees.

When a servant told him with joy the news of the birth of his son, the door of his inner universe was suddenly opened. From the niche of his heart there came the echo, "I shall have to break this one more bond."

Siddhartha then and there ordered the servants that the child should be named Rahul. After that he was for a long time restless and muttering to himself "Rahul, Rahul, Salvation, Salvation."

Night receded and the cold wind of the early hours began to blow. Awakening came in the atmosphere. Tranquillity and cheerfulness

were on the wing. Leaves and flowers were strewn with dew. Conflict in the heart of Siddhartha had been resolved. On his face there was not the slightest sign of the storm that raged in the night. There was the brightness of dawn in his heart. His mind was made up. In his eyes there was new lustre. He went to the king as soon as morning came. Shuddhodan was pleased to see the face of his son contented and cheerful.

"Siddhartha, my son, clouds of anxiety seem to have been dispersed," the father asked with love.

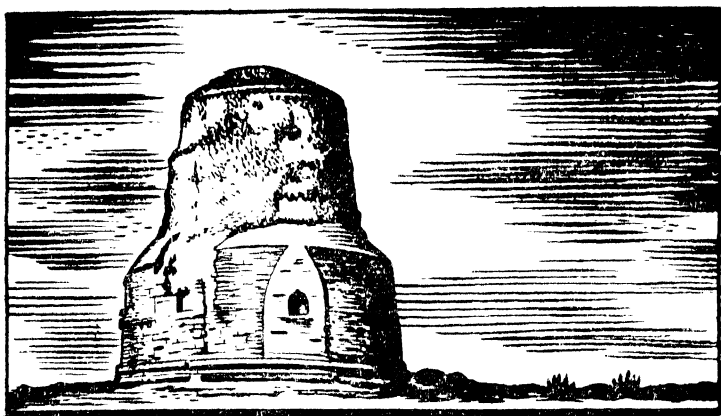
"Yes, father, the clouds of anxiety, sadness and unhappiness have vanished. Now before me there is clear sunlight. I have found my way. I intend to search for that lost Good, that reason of pricking in my heart, by going to the forest. Give me your blessings. My heart is craving for peace beyond happiness and unhappiness, for immortality beyond the heaven, earth and hell. I have no temptation for this your kingdom and the pleasures in it. I am restless like a fish in desert even when I am staying here. Father, even when I belong to you I am not yours. I am split by the inner conflict. I am deceiving you and myself too. Let me go."

. * * * * * *Emptiness Everywhere* * * * *

Shuddhodan was struck with a lightning, as it were, at these words of his son. His whole body began to shiver. "Go hence. Do not allude to this subject again." Somehow he managed to speak these words and sat on his couch. Is Siddhartha really going away in the forest? Will he reduce all our hopes and aspirations to dust? This prince born in Kshatriya family is going to be a yogi wearing ochre-coloured garments! Siddhartha! Siddhartha! the king's heart cried in pain. The words became fainter and fainter and at last dissolved in the air. Emptiness spread everywhere.



* * * * * [33] * * * *



From Sleep to Awakening



According to his father's order, Siddhartha returned to his apartment with heavy steps. He felt that it has fallen to his lot to make his father sad even when he loved him intensely. Some mysterious power stronger than him was urging him on his new path.

Then one night —

The lights in the chandelier were put out.



Siddhartha stood looking at his beloved and his son....

Dancers and the dancing girls were resting. Yashodhara was asleep beholding the happy dreams and clasping the infant Rahul to her heart. There were ripples of joy and sadness on the face of the child. In the trembling light of the lamp sometimes it appeared to laugh and sometimes it appeared prone to cry. Yashodhara was also breathing heavily. Was she beholding unhappy dreams? Siddhartha stood looking at his beloved and at his son without batting his eyelids. At once his one mind

surged up. He asked himself : "Siddhartha, will you go to the forest leaving your loving wife who has placed everything at your feet ? And to whom this new born infant to look ?" His decision began to crumble. He felt himself disjointed and falling to the ground like a heap of earth. He felt like waking his wife up and telling her about his mental conflict, clasping his son to his heart and shedding tears. The thought that he was deceiving them gnawed at his mind. He sat there quite a while undecided whether to go or not to go. Then his eyes turned to the hall in front of him. There his servants, maids, dancers and artists were sleeping untidily. The sight of their deformed bodies and faces contorted in sleep began to strengthen his decision of renunciation. In the bright lamplight and in the splendour of garments these bodies look like statues of beauty, but even temporary sleep reveals their real self. Death shears all the blossom of artificial worldly beauty. The human body on the peak of supreme glory a moment earlier is reduced to dust. I must break this vicious circle of birth and death and go beyond. I must show others also the path of eternal happiness and truth. Such thoughts began to dominate his mind again. Now he forgot his beloved

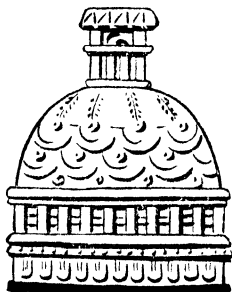
and his son. The chords of love in his heart were snapping. He shot like an arrow out of the apartment. His feet did not hesitate on the threshold. The edges of his eyes did not become wet. As a serpent discards its skin, as a young one of the bird comes out of an egg, Siddhartha had thrown away the shell of family life with as much ease.

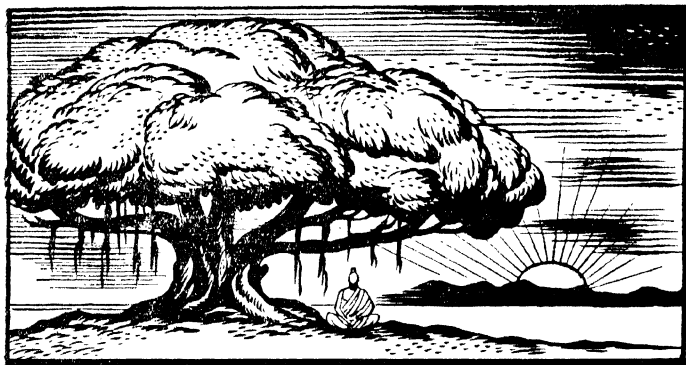
He instantly went to the stable. Even though he called in a low voice, the loyal charioteer Channa woke up. "Who? Prince? Why have you come out alone in this terrible night? I hope you are not about to do anything strange;" the charioteer asked with fear. "My friend Channa, you prepare Kantak as soon as possible. I am not going to tell you anything at this moment. You only once look into my eyes and you will understand everything," Siddhartha replied.

Channa looked into the eyes of Siddhartha. He saw fire burning in his large eyes. He felt as if the whole world is going to be reduced to ashes by that fire. But the next moment he saw the shower of nectar also. Like a man possessed Channa began to make preparations for the prince's departure. Kantak also seemed to understand everything, because he became ready

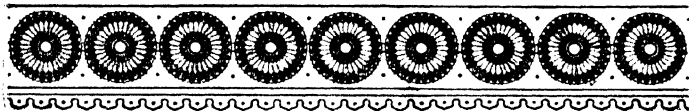
without neighing. He started galloping towards the forest with Siddhartha on his back. When all were asleep, a revolution was taking place in the womb of the universe. As soon as he came out of the city, Siddhartha turned to the capital and the palace and said to himself : "I will not return here unless and until I attain victory over old age, disease and death."

He was going from sleep to awakening.





For Eternal Happiness



Siddhartha took his leave as soon as he and Channa reached the forest. Channa's heart became heavy with sadness. He put his head on the feet of Siddhartha and bathed them with his tears.

"Oh Prince," Channa implored with emotion, "please return for the sake of your parents who saw the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations in you. What will your young and loving

wife feel by your separation? Your new-born child needs your protection. Who will console your subjects?"

Siddhartha was silent for a moment; then he said, "Channa, you are not only my charioteer, but also my friend. Had I been able to express the agony of my heart to you, I would have felt light. But what can I do? How can I tell you? My friend, in the life of every one there comes a moment when he leaves his loved ones and his family and goes away. Death does not excuse anybody. Therefore, why not leave voluntarily, that which is not eternal, which is not your own, which you have to leave one day or the other? Tell my parents and my wife that I have gone in search of the Eternal which nobody can take away from me. You wipe their tears for me!"



Siddhartha put his necklace round Channa's neck.

Siddhartha unclasped the jewel-necklace and put it round Channa's neck. He stroked the back of Kantak. The body of that loyal steed trembled at the touch of his master's hand. Tears welled up in its eyes too. Siddhartha un-

* * * * * *Sword Hangs in Mid-air* * * *

sheathed his sword and with it cut the locks of his silky hair. He handed them over to Channa. In an attempt to lessen the tension of that heart-rending scene, Siddhartha said with humour, "Such velvety hair do not become a Sanyasi. Isn't it so, Channa?"



Siddhartha exchanged his rich garments for the tattered rags of a beggar.

Then he threw up his sword in the air and said, "Let this sword remain hanging in air, if I am going to become a Buddha." It is said that the sword really remained hanging in mid-air.

Channa returned home with heavy heart taking with him the hair and ornaments of Siddhartha. Siddhartha exchanged his rich garments for the tattered rags of a beggar. He was going on and on in that lonely forest.

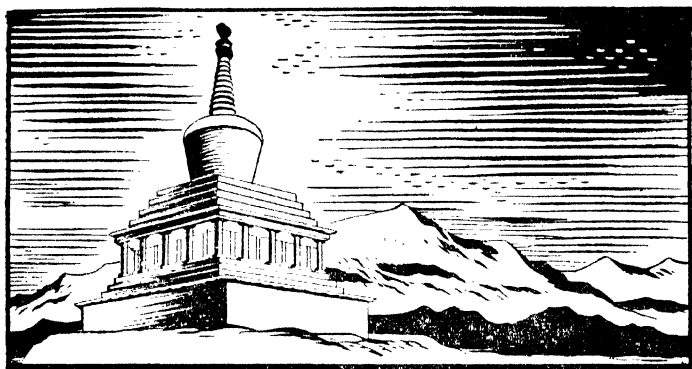
It is recorded that Siddhartha was only nineteen years old when he renounced his family and Rahul had not completed the first year of his life.

In the palace, Yashodhara woke up in the middle of the night. She looked to the bed of Siddhartha. She saw that the bed was empty.

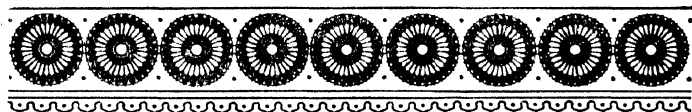
* * * * *For Eternal Happiness* * * * * *

She looked around everywhere in her apartment, but there was no trace of Siddhartha. She ran to the garden and inspected every tree and bower. But Siddhartha was nowhere. Her heart began to sink. She became speechless. She fell to the ground unconscious. Hearing this, the king and the queen came there. The king dispatched his servants in all directions. After some time, Channa appeared with his face down and told all that had happened. King Shuddhodan fell to the ground. The queen began to cry bitterly. Tears in the eyes of Yashodhara dried up. There spread a shadow of sadness over the whole city of Kapilavastu.

Yashodhara clasped to her heart the soft, silky hair of Siddhartha. She threw away all her ornaments, jewelry, rich clothes and such other things. She took a vow : "I also, like my lord, will live like a Sanyasi. From today I will sleep on the ground. I will not touch rich food." Now she started taking food only once in a day. Her time now was spent in religious rituals, prayer, thinking of her husband and bringing up of her son.



Arrival in the Ashram



Siddhartha was walking continuously for many days and many nights. Because of the hardships in the journey his body was transformed. His delicate frame was scorched with the hot sun. His feet were torn by thorns and stones and were bleeding. There was burning hunger in his stomach. He was distressed with thirst. Once he saw a stream of water in front



He ran to the stream, but fell down.

of him. He ran to it but fell down. He had no strength left to recover and get up. He wondered whether he would not die of thirst when water was so nearby.

It is said in Bouddha books that the evil power Mara clutched at this opportunity to break Siddhartha's decision and he began to spread a net of illusion. First, Mara with his sweet voice woke up in the mind of Siddhartha the memories of his past life of luxury. Mara whispered in Siddhartha's ear, "You foolish prince ! Return to your home. It does not become you to be a Sanyasi. You are a warrior. You have a big kingdom. You will be an emperor. Why are you lying in this forest instead of spreading the empire of happiness and peace on the earth ? "

Siddhartha realised Mara's motive and refused to listen to him. Thereupon Mara

* * * * *How Fortunate must be his Wife !* * * * *

walked away. With determination, Siddhartha resumed his journey. Now he had come in the vicinity of Rajgaha. In this area the famous sage Alar Alam was residing. There were many disciples in his Ashram. Siddhartha gained an entrance in the Ashram. The rules and regulations of the Ashram were very strict. All used to eat roots and bulbs and sleep on the ground. The sage taught Siddhartha, the Vedas, Upanishads and other philosophies. He impressed on his mind the importance of faith, reflection, good behaviour and meditation. But the troubled mind of Siddhartha did not become calm. He could not get answers to the questions which were agitating his mind. He was like the musk-deer. He was wandering everywhere after the perfume while the perfume was with himself. After some days he went to another sage named Uddak Ramputra and stayed in his Ashram for a while. But he did not attain peace of mind.

While in that Ashram, Siddhartha became known by the name Gautama. One day, Gautama had gone to the city with other disciples for alms. Looking at his handsome face the young women gave him alms with desire in their eyes. One of them even said audibly, "How fortunate must be his wife, how fortunate his parents !



Women gave him alms with desire in their eyes.

Who must be this desirable youth ? ” Gautama returned without accepting the alms offered by her.

Again, one day, when Gautama had gone to the city, a message came from the king that he should see him. “I am a disciple of the sage. For what I should see the king !” Gautama said to the messenger. The messenger reported this to the king. The king himself came to see Gautama. Seeing his beauty, youth and wisdom, king Bimbisar was surprised. He became attracted to him with parental affection. He said, “Oh son, why have you chosen this ascetic life ? I have no son ; consider me as your father and

* * * * *I am in Search of Eternal Happiness* * * *

come with me. After me, you will inherit my kingdom.”

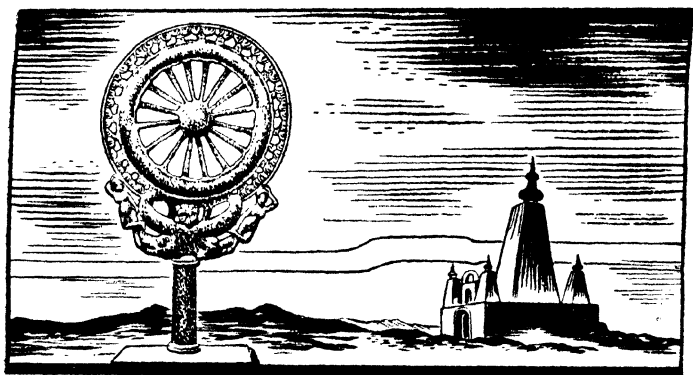
Gautama smiled and replied politely, “Sir, I am thankful to you for your offer. But, perhaps, you do not know that I myself am a prince. My father is the king of Kapilavastu. How can I inherit your kingdom when I have left my own?”

Bimbasar said, “Why have you renounced the world ? What is ailing you ? ”

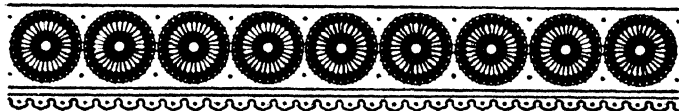
Gautama replied, “Sir, that is what I am searching. I do not want kingdom. I do not want luxury. I am in search of eternal happiness.”

Bimbasar said, “Prince, let success crown your efforts. After you find the path of eternal happiness, do come here. The doors of my kingdom are always open for you. I only wish that Magadha should have the fortune to welcome you.”

Gautama promised the king accordingly. After a while he left even Uddaka Ashram.



No Light Even After Severe Punishment of Flesh



After wandering for a long while in Magadha, Gautama came to Uruvela with his five associates. This spot was very pleasant. It was renowned as a fit place for meditation. There was a kind of peace and tranquillity. There was nothing which could rouse senses and passions. Many sages were residing there and practising

meditation, living on forest fruits and water of the streams.

Gautama selected a suitable place for him in that dense forest. "Now I am going to live a life of privations. I shall kill all the necessities, pains and passions of my body. Perhaps, that will increase the lustre of my soul and give me the eternal happiness sought by me;" so thought Gautama.

Gautama started fasting. He observed silence. He prepared a seat of thorns for sitting. Lest there would be some pleasure for his body, he heaped thorns on all his sides. For six years he underwent very severe bodily punishment and practised meditation. One day, he fell unconscious and his associates believed him to have died. Later, Gautama himself told his disciples about this severe course of life. He said, "In order to control my senses and burn away all the passions in my heart, I started a life of severe discipline. My stomach had touched my back. The body became devoid of all energy. The skin became wrinkled and stuck to my bones. As there had remained no moisture at the roots of hair they used to fall away with only a touch of my hand. Sometimes I used to faint and feel as if my life was ebbing out. But oh, Bhikshus,

No Light Even After Severe Punishment of Flesh

after all this severity, I could not see even a ray of light. I became convinced that fasting, privation and bodily punishment do not lead you to the path of knowledge."

While weak and emaciated like this, Gautama tried to go elsewhere from the spot of his meditation. But as his legs had no strength, he fell down after walking a few steps. Crawling forward he took support of the trunk of a tree. There he was lying unconscious for a while.

When there had come such a time of crisis in the life of Gautama, when he was hovering on the border of life and death, the six enemies like Mara and others again attacked him. They tried to frighten him and to tempt him. But the reason of Gautama was not clouded. His decision of mind was firm. He began to think : I am more and more convinced that my quest is not futile. There are some eternal principles behind these visible changes and catastrophes, in this world. Man's soul is the part of this Eternal Thing. I must go in search for it. But at the same time the path I followed for the last six years is not the correct path of this search ! Many people punish their bodies with severe penance in this life, so that in future they should get happiness in heaven. But according to me, like

earth, Heaven and Hell are also not eternal. I have no temptation of heavenly pleasures. I want to go beyond that.

In the vicinity of the same forest was residing a daughter of a Brahmin, named Sujata. She had promised to the goddess of the forest milk of 100 cows brought up on the milk of 1000 cows, if she would get a husband to her liking. Sujata's desire was fulfilled. She got the husband she wanted. Her house was filled with sons and grandsons. Every year she placed her offering at the root of a tree in this forest. This year also she came there. She halted when she saw a human being seated under that tree. She wondered whether the soul of that

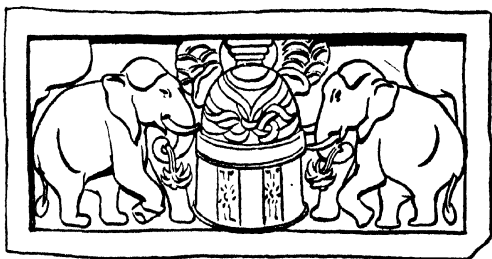


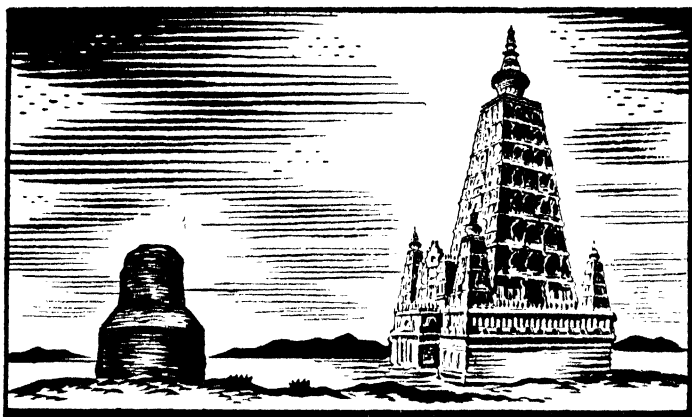
Sujata put her offering before the human form.

No Light Even After Severe Punishment of Flesh

tree had not appeared there in human form. Sujata went forward bracing herself up and put her offering before that human form. It was Gautama. He was distressed with hunger. His mind also had ordained that there was no use in punishing the body unnecessarily. He made full justice to the offering and threw the pot in the stream of water flowing in front of him. He cried "Let the pot go against the current of the stream if I am going to be a Buddha." It is said that the pot really was borne away in the opposite direction.

His five associates lost faith in Gautama because he took food after the severe penance of six years. They went away blaming him. Gautama thanked Sujata from the bottom of his heart. As soon as he became a bit stronger, he started ahead.





Accession of Knowledge



While wandering, Gautama came to the bank of the river Neeranjara. (Now this river is called Falgu.) There he prepared a seat for himself under a tree. The surrounding atmosphere was exhilarating. Gautama went into meditation. In order to break his trance Mara showered on him fire, stones and weapons. But Gautama did not even stir from his seat. Finally, Mara sent his three beautiful daughters to tempt him.

They staked the magic of all their voluptuous beauty. But Gautama did not even once look at them. Then one of them tried to be more intimate with him. Thereupon Gautama for a moment glanced at them with anger and instantly they became ugly old women shorn of all their beauty. Finally, they accepted their defeat and asked his forgiveness. Thereupon they got their beauty back. In this way Mara was completely put out.

In Bouddha books there are frequent references to Mara and his evil doings. Really speaking, Mara is the symbol of six enemies of the man's soul. His attacks are the restlessness or conflict in the heart of Gautama. After Gautama attained full control over his body and mind, Mara was defeated. This balanced state of mind is considered very necessary for meditation. After that the stream of meditation constantly flows without any hindrance in the mind. Gautama had reached that stage.

After the conflict in the mind of Gautama was resolved, new faiths took places of the old. After going through the four stages of meditation he attained pure self-knowledge. First of all, before his mind began to revolve the wheel of his past births. How he went through diffe-

rent lives and how he reached the stage of becoming a Buddha was clearly seen by him. He saw himself as a whole and by that he got peace of mind. Every person sees the life of his present birth and particularly of the present moment. But before Gautama, was now spread the screen of his whole life. Future birth of a person is determined by the good and evil deeds done by him in his present birth. Therefore, from this point of view, every person is a controller of his own destiny. Similarly, the deed of a person is the fruit of his thoughts and thoughts spring from the mind. Therefore, steadiness of mind is the most important thing. The puzzle was solved at last by Gautama.

After the first three hours of the night passed, the mystery of three worlds was revealed before his supernatural sight. He peeped into all the three worlds : Heaven, Earth and the nether world. He was neither tempted by the Heaven, neither did he like to punish the evil-doers by condemning them to the life of hell. All creatures are put to test on the earth and according to the stock of good and evil of each, are sent either to heaven or the nether world. But even heaven and hell are not permanent or eternal. There is a constant change from these worlds also. Therefore, he inferred that there



For seven days Buddha sat under the tree in meditation.

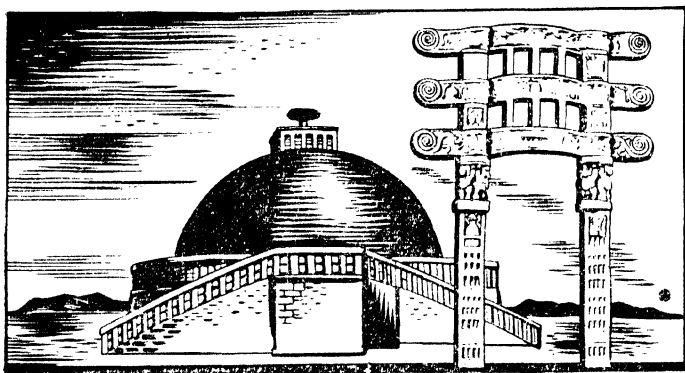
must be something Eternal beyond Heaven. He named that state as Nirvana.

Now, the third part of the night had come. All the nature was calm and motionless. At this peaceful time the flame of knowledge began to burn brightly in his heart. Gautama attained wisdom. He became a Buddha. Eternal truth was revealed to him. All his doubts were resolved. All the problems were solved. To the east the first crack of dawn was visible.

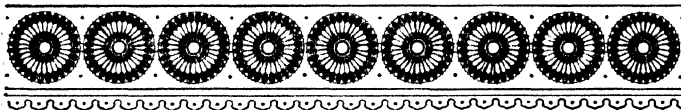
* * * * * *Gods Showered Flowers* * * *

After that, for seven days Buddha was sitting under the same tree in meditation. Earth was joyful by his attainment of knowledge. Gods showered this fourth Buddha with flowers. When knowledge came to him, Buddha was only thirty-five. It is believed that he attained knowledge on the full-moon day in the month of Vaishakha. The tree under which he attained knowledge is still there at Buddhagaya, (Bihar). It is believed that this Bodhi tree has the power in its sprout to give birth to another tree.





Freedom From Desire



Buddha himself has described the moment of his attainment of Knowledge thus : "When the dawn of knowledge cracked on the horizon of my mind, I felt confident that my mind was being freed from thirst, released from the wheel of birth and rebirth, going beyond the darkness of ignorance and that I had reached the ideal. Desire is the origin of all passions, all diseases and all unhappiness. I felt that there was none else in the world who knew how to abolish this

desire, how to dispel the web of passions. I had found the path for going to eternal life from death, to the steady and the eternal from the unsteady and perishable."

Buddha was considering whether the knowledge revealed to him should be made available to the others. Thereupon, it is said in a Bouddha book, Brahma himself requested him to teach "Dhamma" (religion) to the world. It is said in this book that till Buddha was undecided the earth was trembling, Gods were apprehensive. Finally, pity was born in the heart of Buddha. He decided to favour the world. He decided to teach his new religion while living in this world.

"I am sounding the drum of knowledge in the darkness of the world. Those who have got ears should have new faith." With this announcement Buddha began his tour. The wheel of religion again started moving. Jesus Christ told the people, "I am the son of God. Follow me." The same confidence is found in the founders of religion and philosophers like Socrates, Shankaracharya and others. Before all of them, Buddha stood before the world with the same self-confidence.

There was the question before him as to whom he should teach first. All his five associates had left him in anger. His preceptors

Alar Kalam and Uddaka had left this world. Finally, in the penance-forest of Sarnath near Koshi, Buddha came across his five former associates. They had resolved first not to speak with Buddha. But as Buddha approached them they were attracted to him as if by a magnet. They realized in their hearts that Buddha had attained knowledge. They were astonished by the lustre of contentment on his face. They touched his feet with submission.

The penance-ground of Sarnath was particularly well-known at that time. In this place killing of any creature was prohibited. There were Ashrams of many sages of Bharat. In this sacred place Buddha gave his first discourse. It was full-moon day in the month of Ashadha.

Fortunately, the gist of this first historical discourse of Buddha is still existant. Those who want to lead a religious life must lead a life of restrictions. Extremes must be avoided. Extreme



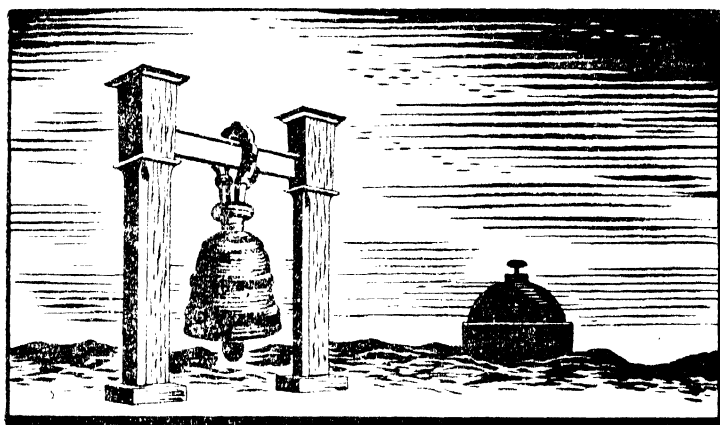
The first historical discourse of Buddha.

bodily punishment and extreme indulgence, both should be rejected. For this reason, Buddha advocated the middle course. As human desire is the root of all misery, he put forth eight moral principles, eight paths or eight steps to abolish this desire. The gist of the teaching of Buddha is contained in these eight moral principles like all pervading sight, all pervading speech, all pervading effort etc. After his first discourse, Buddha got sixty disciples. His pet disciple Ananda was among these. Ananda was a shadow of Buddha, as it were. He was always with him.

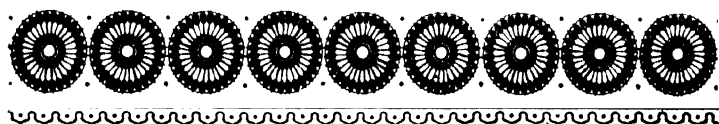
After that, many disciples joined Buddha. It is true that they revolted against the Yagna system, caste system, tradition etc., in Vedic religion, but Buddhism was not an anti-Brahmin Sect. Among his disciples were Sari-putta and Mogallan, the best of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas like Ananda and Devadatta, Vaishyas like Tapasa and Bhallik and Shudras like Upali. It is recorded, that at one time in the band of disciples of Buddha, there were 113 Brahmins, 60 Kshatriyas, 53 ministers, knights etc., 7 landlords, 9 Sutas, 10 slaves or workers, 3 children, 3 orphans and 1 actor. From this it is proved that Buddha sect had raised its banner against inequality consequent upon the division by caste

and profession. According to many historians it was a really democratic movement. It was a conscious attempt to open the treasure of knowledge to all, without monopolising it. By this attempt, the prevalent violence and unbridled bad behaviour were checked and new turn was given to history. There are references to show that at that time even cows were sacrificed at the time of Yadnya.





For the Happiness and Good of the People



Rainy season had started. Buddha decided to return to Uruvela. Before going, he called his disciples to him and said, "Oh ye Bhikshus, now you start out from here for the happiness and welfare of the masses of people. Have deep sympathy and pity for the world and make effort for the welfare of human beings. All of you

* * * * *For the Happiness and Good of the People*

should not go in one direction. Everyone of you should go to a different part. Give that teaching to the world whose beginning, middle and the end are equally celestial. Announce to the world the sacred, pure and unblemished life. Now, start your wanderings.”

In the beginning Buddha himself used to admit a newcomer to his sect by saying, “Ehi Bhiku (Come, oh ! Bhikshu). Now his disciples were about to be scattered and wander everywhere. Therefore he told them the way how to admit new disciples in the sect. Any newcomer used to get an admission in the sect by uttering thrice the words: “Buddham Saranam Gachhami, Sangham Saranam Gachhami, Dhammam Saranam Gachhami.”

Buddha started for Uruvela. On the way, at one place he saw some young men and women playing. One of the youths had brought with him a woman who was not his wife. That woman ran away with the clothes and other articles of all others. That young man began to search the woman here and there. Seeing Buddha he asked, “Sir, did you see any woman running away this side ?” Buddha smiled and replied, “Why are you searching for that woman in vain? Why don’t you spend that time in search of

yourself ?” The man became crestfallen. Light flashed in his mind and he threw himself at the feet of Buddha.

The method of speaking of Buddha was mostly of questions and answers. Small sentences, full of everyday illustrations. He used mild humour and at times irony. He ridiculed and exposed the persons who unnecessarily made a mystery of secret path of the knowledge of Brahma. He said, “My disciples, in this world only women, knowledge of priests and false religious opinion have secretiveness. But the opinions of him who has become Buddha are clear as sunlight and free as wind.” Before his death he told Ananda, “Ananda, I always preached truth. There is nothing secretive about truth. The fist of Tathagata (Buddha used to call himself Tathagata i.e., who has come after the former Buddhas) is always open.”

While advising his audience to study the different philosophies, different revelations and different thoughts from the point of view of reason, Buddha said, “Apply the test of logic to all the thoughts, to all the paths that are kept before you. Do not accept the opinion of any person only because you have respect for him. Do not believe hearsay things. Do not accept anything only because it is sanctified by tradition.

* * * * *For the Happiness and Good of the People*

Do not accept any word only because it has occurred in scriptures. Do not let my name hinder your power of independent thinking."

These words of Buddha prove his objective and analytical attitude. Once his pet disciple Sariputta praised his intelligence and said, "My lord, I think there had been no greater Buddha before and I do not think there will be any greater Buddha in future, than you."

On hearing this Buddha smiled mischievously. He asked Sariputta "Have you known all the Buddhas who came before me?"

Sariputta : No Sir.

Buddha : Then you must be knowing Buddhas that will come in future.

Sariputta : No, Sir.

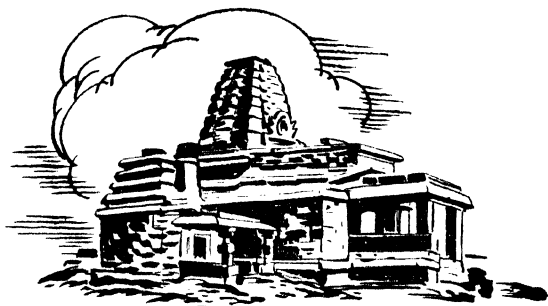
Buddha : At least you must have peeped in my inner mind. You know me very well. Is it not so ?

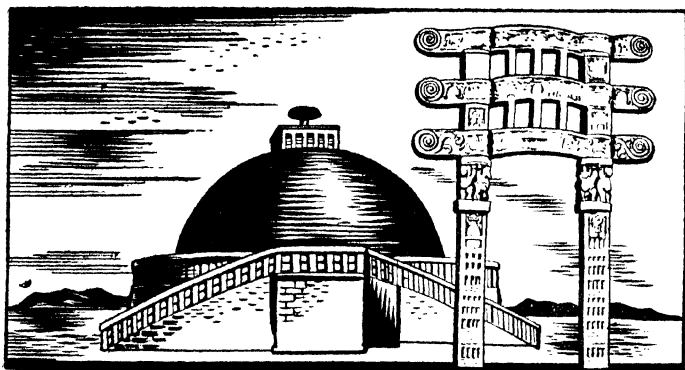
Sariputta : No, my Lord. It cannot be put that way.

Buddha : Then, Sariputta, why did you make such a rash statement ? When we know so little about the past, the present and the future, why should we make such rash statements ?

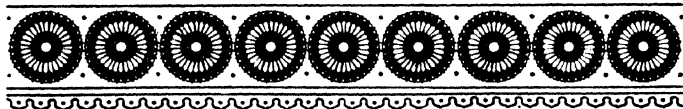
Sariputta could not give any reply. Buddha used to speak with his followers in this manner.

He used to make them think radically for themselves. He himself used to take care of the freedom of thinking of his followers, personally. He used to think that if his disciples give up the work of search for truth by accepting somebody as their preceptor, they cannot attain salvation of themselves and of others. It is said in 'Mahaparinibban Sutta,' "Attadeep, Attasaran Dhammadeep, Dhammesaran." (Be persons who think their soul as their only support. Be persons whose light is the religion of truth and whose support is also the religion of truth). This is the main message of Buddha.





Supporter of the Miserables



It will be seen that all the saints have taken side of and supported the miserable, weak, unhappy, poor and Shudra among people. It is seen from the lives of Buddha, Shankaracharya, Ekanath, Chaitanya, Kabir, Tukaram, Nanak, Ramkrishna Paramahansa or Mahatma Gandhi that they had become one with the miserable and unhappy people in the society. If he saw any

* * * * * *I do not want Nirvana* * * * *

ill person, Buddha used to say to his disciples, "Nurse him as you would nurse me." He used to draw downtrodden people near him. Once while walking on the street he saw a scavenger. The scavenger, according to his habit of saluting everybody, saluted Buddha. Buddha, without thinking, called him, "Ehi Bhikku" (Come, Bhikshu) and admitted him in his sect. At one place Buddha says, "I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaishya. I am one of the common people. I have nothing of my ownership. Nobody is a Brahmin by birth and nobody is a Shudra by birth. Each one becomes a Brahmin or a Shudra by his deeds."

Reading the talks Buddha had with farmers, shepherds or blacksmiths, one feels that he had become one with common people. The wise, great man like him used to imagine himself in the place of a farmer, a shepherd or a blacksmith. After his attainment of knowledge, Mara said to him, 'Now you proceed to Nirvana. There is no reason to wander about propagating knowledge you have attained.' Buddha declined to agree with him and said, 'I do not want Nirvana. I will wander among the nations and give knowledge to the common people.' We must love all the creatures in this world even as mother

loves her only son. Such was his teaching. He had no faith in the bombast of Brahma, spirituality and knowledge. His speech also had become sweet because of his deep love of the world and intense pity in his heart. He was particular to see that none is hurt in the least by his words or deeds. Sariputta has written that he had never seen or heard of a sweet tongued person like Buddha. "By argument persons go away from each other. By hard words deeper wounds are caused than by arrows. Nothing is gained by the argument except getting ovation. Win all by love" Buddha always used to tell his disciples.

A question may naturally be raised in our minds as to why Buddha, who asks us to love the world, should cause unhappiness to his relatives? Why did he cause mental distress to his parents, wife, son and friends by leaving his house? This question has been answered by Buddha himself. He said, "Bhikshus, why did I become a wandering mendicant? It is because I could not bear to stay in my house. House is the origin of dust. In order to avoid the dust of selfishness, hopes and aspirations I decided to soar high in the sky." In his another discourse he says, "If there are too many fish in a small pond, they attack each

other. Similarly, I saw human beings attacking each other and I left for the forest. I decided to discover truth." If we bring before our mind's eye the battles, violence, anarchy and injustice that raged in Buddha's time, we shall be able to correctly appreciate the reason given by him. Had he been merely afraid to see the miseries of old age, disease and death, he would not have wandered in the same world again after he attained knowledge. It seems exaggerated that Siddhartha went away into the forest because he was distressed to see an old man, a diseased person, a corpse and a yogi, while going about in the city.

Oneness with all creatures and selflessness have been taught by both Geeta and Buddha. There was a rule that Bhikshus should not have any property of their own. Buddha used to tell all people from princes to common people, to give away their belongings. The great Buddha-Vihars, temples, travellers' houses, monuments of art and culture have been erected out of these gifts. Once Buddha was asked, "What is the worst thing or failure in life ? Buddha replied, "Hoarding of wealth ! There is no greater evil than the act of a person who eats alone even when

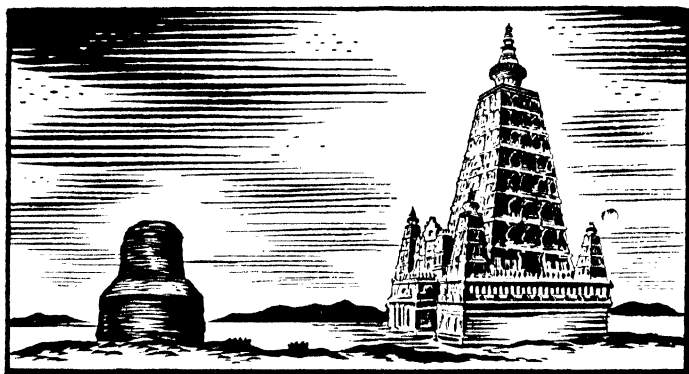
* * * * *Supporter of the Miserables* * * * * *

he has abundance of supplies. It is his greatest defeat in life !”

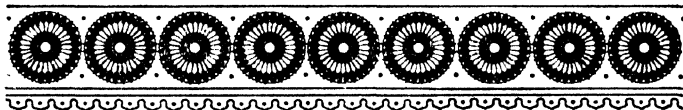
Another person asked, “ Which is the best or the sweetest thing in life ? ”

Buddha replied, “ Truth ! Truth is the honey in the speech, the soul of Dharma. From it is born the love of the world.”





No Place for Miracle



In the Boudha books there occur descriptions of many miracles, from the curing of a diseased person to resurrecting a dead man by a touch of hand. There are also woven webs of miracles around Christ, Shankaracharya and Mohamed Paigambar. But the point of view of Buddha himself was completely rational. He never arrogated to himself that he has solved the mystery of the

universe or that he possessed divine inspiration and power. In this respect it will be well to keep in mind the following incident.

Once a woman by name Kisha Gautami came to him, loudly wailing and bringing with her the corpse of her dead child. She implored Buddha to make the child live again by any means. Buddha told her calmly, "Please bring me some salt and mustard from a house where there has been not a single death as yet. If you bring it, then I will resurrect your child." The woman wandered much to seek such a house, but she could not find any. In every house there had come death at one time or the other. The woman at last understood in her mind the real purport of Buddha's words and held his feet in submission.

Buddha never also vaunted his own religion or philosophy. He held that it becomes difficult to carry out the responsibility of the search for truth, once a person adopts a particular sect. "The value of the various theories or analyses is as much as the value of the ideas of a chicken in the egg, about the outer world," he said frankly. Buddha says in *Tevijjasutra*, "Religious teachers talk about Brahma. But they had never seen Brahma. It is like a person preparing to build a staircase when he did not know where

a building is to be erected or a person falling in love when he did not know who is the woman he is going to love.”

Buddha used to call himself Tathagata. Tathagata means a person whose words correspond to his deeds or a person who carries on the tradition of his forerunners. In this, he wanted to show that he was not telling anything new. “There is no philosophy which can be called as my own. I do not know the truth of a settled pattern” so said Socrates. Christ had abhorrence of settled opinions. Mahatma Gandhi also said that there was no such thing as Gandhism. All great philosophers think alike.

Buddha placed before his followers a very simple moral path. He divided his disciples into two classes. One class was Bhikshus. In this were persons who had renounced everything. For them ten rules were laid down. A path of eight parts was placed before others, which could be followed even while remaining in worldly life. Almost all of his discourses were before the common people.

The fame of Buddha spread in all the four directions. He received invitations from different emperors. He was wandering everywhere.

Buddha, Sangha and Dhamma were receiving ovation everywhere.

There was not an emperor worth the name after the period of Puranic times of the great Bharatiya war, that is, after the Pandavas lost their influence. Various small regional states were rising up. Most of them were established on the basis of caste or race. There are references in ancient Bouddha books, of such sixteen caste-states like Arya, Magadha, Kashi, Koshala, Vriji, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Shoorasen, Ashwaka, Avantika, Gandhar and Kamboj. In Jataka stories the names of Shivi, Sounweer, Madra, Virat and Udayan appear. There were frequent battles among these states. There was also an anarchy in the kingdom of thought. Worship of animals and birds, magic charms and spells, yagna were rampant. But there was also one stream flowing towards Adwaita or oneness. It must be said that the great achievement of Buddha was that he put an end to anarchy in the fields of thought, politics and culture. He also stopped wars among the kings. For this purpose he used to advance an unanswerable argument. For example :

Once Buddha intervened when two states were about to clash with each other due to

a quarrel over a dam of water. He requested all of them to lay down their arms for a while. Then he called both the kings to him and asked,

“Oh mighty kings, is there much value in itself to earth?”

The kings replied, “No.”

Buddha—“Alright! Is there much value to water either?”

Kings — “No Sir.”

Buddha — “Is human blood of any value?”

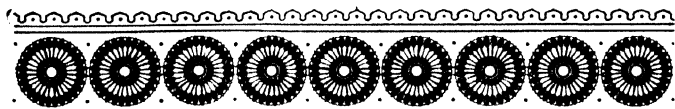
Kings — “Yes, human blood has much value.”

Buddha — “Then, oh Kings, why should you shed valuable blood for the things which have no value at all?”

Upon that the kings gave up their decision to fight with each other. Buddha had deprecated all the three forms of violence : violence of deed, sight and object. But he held that there was no objection if one eats meat which is received as alms. On this point there was also an argument between him and some of his disciples. Because of his method of looking at everything from the point of view of reason he could see that non-violence and meat-eating are consistent with each other.



Meeting of Father and Son



Shuddhodan was overjoyed to hear the news of attainment of knowledge by his son. His heart was glad to see the lustre of Buddha spreading everywhere. His one mind was straining to meet Buddha, but his other mind reminded him of his wounded vanity and failure of expectations. The queen Mahaprajapati was constantly urging the king to invite Buddha to the kingdom and

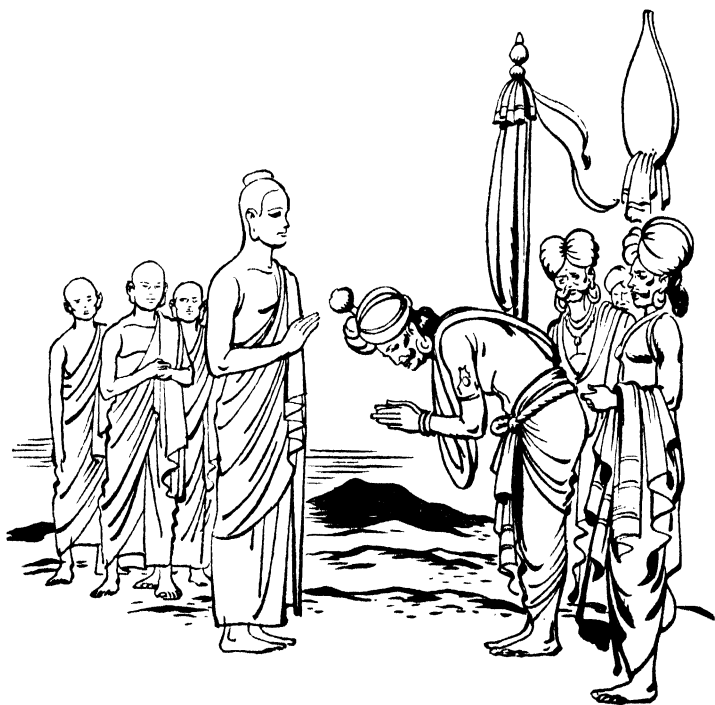
honour him, but Yashodhara was silent. Rahul was now eight years old. He was learning archery, the vedas, the upanishads, the Scriptures and the Puranas. He was not able to understand the meaning of his mother's ascetic life and his father's absence. Sometimes he used to ask various questions to Yashodhara, who used to tell him, "Your father is the great Buddha -- the saviour of the world. He is now no more your father only, for he has become the father of the world."

King Shuddhodan sent a messenger to Buddha to invite him. The messenger went up to Buddha, but he lost himself beholding the lustrous personality and hearing the speech of Buddha. One after another the king sent many servants, but all of them stayed with Buddha and became Bhikshus. Finally, the king sent his minister to Buddha with the following message :

"Buddha, I have become old now. Let me once see you to my heart's content with my eyes, before I leave this world !"

The minister went to the Buddhavihar at Rajagaha and gave the King's message to Buddha. This minister also became the disciple of Buddha, but did not forget his duty to persuade Buddha to go and meet his father.

Finally, Buddha gave an order to all the Bhikshus to start for Kapilavastu. The minister started ahead. The king, the queen and the people were overjoyed to learn the news of the advent of Buddha. The preparations for his welcome began. Flags and festoons were hoisted everywhere. After some days Buddha reached the town with his followers. The king went to the outskirts of the city and accorded him a wel-



For the first time Shuddhodan bowed before his son.

come. For the first time Shuddhodan bowed before his own son. His heart was full and tears streamed from his eyes. Buddha embraced his father. All were speechless to see the lustrous complexion and divine beauty of Buddha.

It is related in Bouddha books, that some Shakya knights and titled dignitaries did not like that a father should bow to his son. Buddha guessed this reaction and in an instant he made a flight to heaven and from his body flew lustrous rays of fire. Pride of the knights was broken. They were convinced that even though Siddhartha was the son of Shuddhodan, Lord Buddha was greater than all.

It was natural that the desire should spring in her heart of the king and the queen, at the sight of their son. The king said, "Siddhartha, who will now support me in my old age ? Where was the necessity for you to accept this path of



In an instant Buddha made a flight to heaven.

asceticism ? ”

Buddha paused for a while ; then he said in a soft voice, “ Sir, desire is the origin of all sorrow — it means temptation of life. Passions are born of ignorance and desire, and the soul becomes the slave of passions. It will certainly be good if he can be free from these bonds. Ignorance and desire are destroyed by inner knowledge and by inspired divine knowledge. Good deeds which the mind which is on the right and moral path alone can do, cannot be done by one’s parents or near relatives.”

King — “ But, Buddha, for this purpose is it necessary for a son to leave his parents or for a husband to leave his wife ? Is it necessary to forego duty for the purpose ? ”

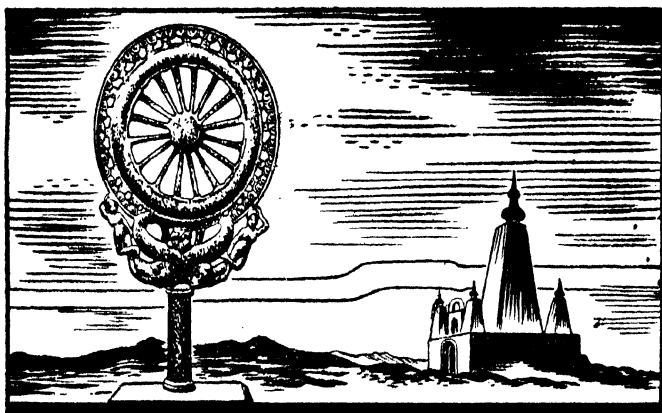
Buddha — “ Sir, love must free the heart. All good deeds are included in love which gives happiness of Salvation. Love shines, it gives out light. Even as a mother protects her only child at times risking her life, the human being should tend his love for the whole world. There is no selfishness in love. I love parents of all, as I love my own parents.
/ Some people say, ‘ Buddha takes away children from their parents, makes

women widows and brings about disintegration of family.' But Tathagata has never asked people to end life, or to run away from life. On the contrary, I have been showing the path of rich life, higher life. I do not preach inaction. I tell people not to do anything evil.

"Sir, what you understand by life is not the whole of life. It is a part of life. It is only a link in the chain. This life is a link or a bridge. Do not build a house on it. This life is a river. Do not try to cling to its bank. Life is a seasonal game. Do not lose yourself in it or do not also neglect it. Use it for the preparation of mind as you use a gymnasium. Because, behind all these visible and invisible things there is the mind. A man's state depends upon the preparation of this mind.

"We all are unhappy by birth, death, disease, destruction, getting what we do not like and losing what we love. Birth-death, anger-hate etc., are everywhere. They are the signs of conflict and inconsistency in our lives. There is conflict in all the world and Salvation means getting oneself free from this conflict."

All people, including the king and the queen became enchanted by this discourse of Buddha.



Buddha Meets Yashodhara



The discourse had ended and the people were returning home after bowing to Buddha, but Buddha's eyes were searching for Yashodhara in that crowd of people. She was nowhere to be seen. Buddha guessed in his mind that Yashodhara must be angry with him. He felt that her anger was quite justified.

Next day, as usual, Buddha and all his dis-



Rich and delicious food is prepared for you.

ciples started for begging alms in the city. Residents of Kapilavastu felt odd and embarrassing to see their prince begging. The king hearing this, came running and said, "Buddha, your circumstances are not such as would necessitate your begging for alms. This beggar's bowl does not become you. We have arranged for a variety of rich and delicious food for you in the palace. We are all waiting for you."

Buddha replied calmly, "Sir, formerly I was your son, today I am a Bhikshu, and begging is my religion. Begging sheds man's ego, and he attains humility. He becomes pure and faithful in mind. Behind your prohibiting me to beg, is your egoism. I have accepted this path of begging for the salvation of myself and others."

The king was convinced in his heart about the truth of Buddha's words. His pride and the

honour of his family had come in the way. But even after realising it, he did not like Buddha to hold the begging bowl before his subjects, in his presence. After going to two or three houses, the king brought Buddha to the palace. There all the preparation was made for dinner. After many years the father and the son were taking food together. Shuddhodan was overwhelmed with emotion of love. With a lump in his throat he said, "My son, I am distressed to see you living on the crumbs of alms — you who were accustomed to eat nectar-sweet food out of the plate of gold. Really, your behaviour is unusual. I do not know what to say to you." Buddha did not say anything in reply. He only kept laughing. After a while, the queen Mahaprajapati and other ladies of the household came there. Prince Nanda, the son of the king from the queen Prajapati, Devadatta and other princes also come. All went away after paying homage to Buddha. But today also Yashodhara did not come. Rahul was also absent. Finally, Buddha himself asked the king, "Sir, please take me to the apartment of Yashodhara. I want to see her."

When Buddha stepped into Yashodhara's apartment, she was engrossed in worship. Buddha was astonished to see her with her hair



'My Lord....' she said only this and again she placed her head on the feet of Buddha.

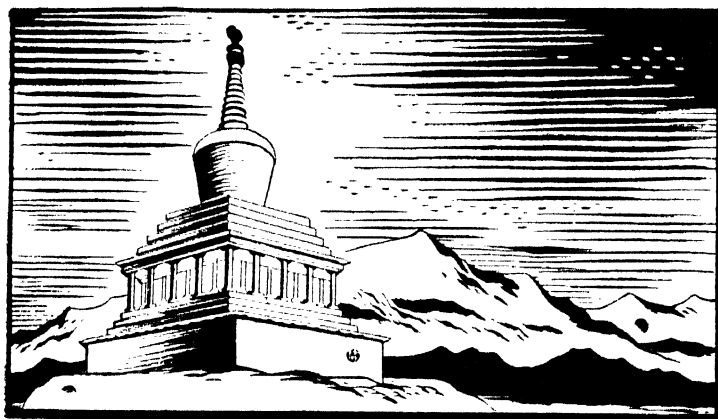
loose, wearing yellow garments, and her body emaciated by fasting. He stood looking at her. With great efforts Yashodhara had controlled her tears, but seeing Buddha before her in person, they began to stream down. Forgetting the wound of her heart Yashodhara came running to Buddha like a river coursing down to the sea and threw herself at his feet. Tears were flowing out of her eyes profusely. Not a word could come out of her lips. Her whole body was trembling. "My Lord....." she said only this and again she placed her head on the feet of Buddha.

"Yashodhara, get up ! You are great. Your sacrifice is great and you are also going to get a great fruit of it. I am not your lord. You are mistress of yourself. You are greater than me ! Please foregive me " so saying, Buddha raised her up. Yashodhara then put Rahul on the feet of Buddha.

That evening Buddha gave a discourse before all the populace of Kapilavastu. All men, women and children of the city were present. Buddha simplified the 'Dhamma' sutras in his discourse before them. Yashodhara, the king and the queen also came for the discourse. In this discourse of Buddha were revealed all his knowledge, all his softness, all his pity. The

lustrous great man sat on a high pedestal in Padmasana. The halo of the setting sun shone round his head and there was a trace of smile on his face and deep pity in his eyes. All the doubts and questions were dispelled only on his sight. All were hearing every word of his with their souls in their ears. Buddha told them about five rules of morality for the common people—not to commit violence, to remain indifferent about the things not obtained, to keep away from untruth and not to indulge in intoxicating things.

“My people, I have nothing to do with the change of religion. I do not want only to enlarge my sect, for it is not the business of Tathagata to ridicule Vedic religion, image worship etc., but I believe that the worship of religion is greater than the animal worship, Yadnaya, animal sacrifice and such other things. The foundation of religion is not blind faith, but purification of mind with conscious effort. For this purpose only I have put my path before you for your consideration. Do you agree that Brahmavihar is nothing but to love unselfishly the whole animate and inanimate world, to hate nobody?” This question of Buddha was answered by all those assembled with an unanimous “Yes”. The former capital of Buddha became the main centre of his new path.



Shining Heritage of Rahul



Buddha was to leave the capital on the third day, and the king and the queen urged him to stay on, but Buddha declined, saying that an ascetic must not stay at one place for a long time. He said to Shuddhodan, "Sir, I have got but a small number of people with me. Our strength is limited but this earth has no limit. Please allow us to proceed."

Hearing that Buddha was leaving, Yasho-

that all my sons and grandsons should become Bhikshus ? Who will be the heir to my throne ? You should not at least make other parents unhappy in this way. Please do not admit any one in your Sangh without the permission of his parents.”

Buddha agreed with the king. He promised the king to do so and in course of time made a rule of admission in the Sangh, accordingly. Hearing the news of Rahul and Nanda joining the Sangh, all the cousins of Buddha and other princes entered it. Among them was Devadatta. For the whole of his life Devadatta hated Buddha. He was burning with anguish since the time when Siddhartha defeated him at the Swayamvara of Yashodhara. Now he also entered the Sangh with wicked motives. Buddha knew this in his mind, but the doors of the Sangh were open to all and Buddha hoped that perhaps in course of time there will come about a change in Devadatta's heart.

When Devadatta started to go to Buddha for becoming a Bhikshu, a funny incident happened. All the princes who were proceeding to see Buddha, had rich clothes and ornaments on their bodies. In the street they met a barber and they gave all their ornaments and clothes to him.



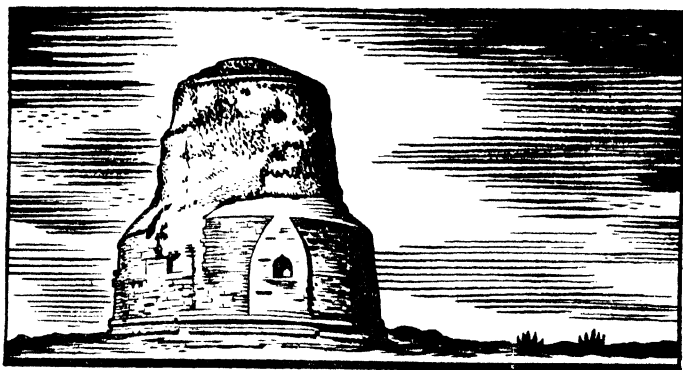
A kite snatched away the ornaments from Devadatta's hair.

The barber asked, "Where are you going?" The princes replied, "We are going to Lord Buddha to become his followers." On hearing this the barber put the clothes and the ornaments there only and he also started to go with the princes to Buddha. While others were engrossed in conversation, Devadatta hid his ornaments in his hair. As they were proceeding ahead a kite swooped down and snatched away the ornaments out of the pleats of Devadatta's hair. All started laughing.

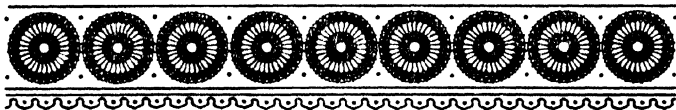
Buddha was very pleased to see these princes. One of his cousins, Ananda, had already joined the Sangh. Only a few of these princes could

understand the discourses of Buddha. But Buddha believed that Salvation or Nirvana could be achieved also by love and faith. Buddha used to say that all questions could not be solved by reason; critical approach is desirable, but after a certain limit it also becomes crippled. Love and pity is the life-giving power of religion. In one of his discourses he has said, "If you want to have replies of certain questions but reason cannot supply them, then follow me and obtain the replies yourselves. In this world there are so many things which are not accessible to ordinary intelligence, but how can we deny their existence because of it?"

Once, a Bhikshu by name Malankyaputta got angry because Buddha did not reply to all his questions. He threatened that he would leave the Sangh and return to his family, if all his doubts are not resolved. Buddha smiled mischievously and said, "Malankyaputta, if your heart is not in Dharma, it would be better if you return to your former life. Had I promised you to give replies to all of your questions when you accepted Dharma? Were these questions even suggested to you at that time? Today also, without replying to your questions, I will tell you a small story. Imagine that a person is struck with a poisoned arrow. His friends



Buddha's Way of Life



Buddha returned to Rajagaha with his followers. A rich merchant named Ananthapindika had already arrived there to take them to his city named Shravasti. Buddha accepted his invitation. Ananthapindika was delighted. He proceeded ahead to Shravasti and made preparations for welcoming Buddha. He purchased a beautiful garden paying a cartful of gold mohurs. He erected a big Vihara in it. We are surprised

to know by reading the description of this Vihara, how the art of sculpture had advanced at that time. This garden with the Vihara in it was named 'Jitavan.'

On reaching Shravasti, Buddha and all his followers started to go round for alms, the next day. The wealthy Ananthapindika had also joined them. He was telling everybody "I am overjoyed by what I gave to Buddha. I have brought him here so that everyone of you should attain this happiness." The residents of Shravasti contributed generously. One girl gave away a coarse shirt which was with her. Hearing that she had nothing else to give away, Ananthapindika was pleased. Saying that her sacrifice was very great he sent her brocaded garments and ornaments as a present.

It is worthwhile knowing about how Buddha and his disciples used to live and what was their daily routine.

No person who joined the Sangh could keep in this world any property, relation, gold and silver, jewellery etc. as his own. It was the



One girl gave away a coarse shirt which was with her.

rule that he must live on alms. No Bhikshu could keep with him anything except the things absolutely necessary, like three yellow garments, three robes, a begging bowl, a staff, a razor and books. There were more than two hundred rules of behaviour in the Sangh.

Buddha himself used to get up early in the morning and practise meditation and contemplate about his sect and his teachings. Buddha philosophy was the greatest moral code available to man at that time. It was founded upon scientific basis and analysis of mind. It included many things from religion, philosophy, mysticism, materialism, psychology and yoga to various rituals. But Buddha held that like life the philosophy of life also must be dynamic and therefore it should be subjected to constant contemplation.

After contemplation he used to set out in the city to collect alms. Buddha never gave up this ritual inspite of inclement weather or other difficulties. He believed it to be the important duty in the life of Bhikshu. On returning he used to collect his disciples around him and tell them about his daily experiences and small incidents and through them, as in a flash, reveal before his disciples the great principles underlying such small incidents. Without him-

self drawing any inference he used to make his disciples think and help them to reach that inference.

After that Buddha used to take his meals. He used to take simple food, but scarcely he paid any attention to it. After taking food he used to rest in his private room and think about his evening discourse. Every evening there was a programme of public discourse and questions and answers. This discussion by questions and answers used to last till late in the night, for there was no limit of time for that. Buddha himself cared little for time because he had realised that it was a mirage. Because of this he had become steady and tolerant. He never lost the balance of mind while giving his discourse or while discussing, and he never got angry. He tried to satisfy everybody.

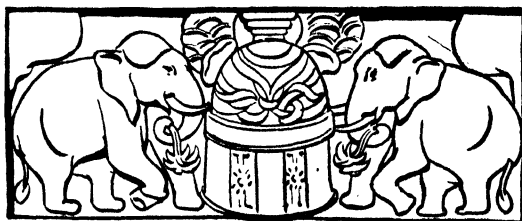
He held that tolerance should be the main characteristic of a religion or a person. Time is limitless and the time required to exhaust time will be as much as to break a mountain of hard rock, with dimensions of thousands of miles, by striking it with a piece of muslin cloth once in a century. Therefore, he said, do not tell anyone the excuse of time.

He had prohibited criticism on other religious sects through the discourses or teachings.

Once, one Brahmin severely criticised Buddha and his Sangh and Buddha's disciples got wild. But Buddha told them. "I will be unhappy if you talk against others only because others speak against me. If you get angry and discontented you will suffer spiritual loss yourselves. You will not, in your fit of anger, be able to determine whether the criticism levelled by others is proper or not."

Once a man came to Buddha and abused him. But Buddha said calmly, "Tell me, if a person offered food to a beggar and the beggar refused it, to whom will the food belong?" The man replied, "It will belong to the giver." Buddha said, "Then if I refuse to accept your abuses and curses, to whom will they belong?"

Buddha's behaviour was cultured. He was keeping an ideal before others through his own life.





A Dancing Girl Honoured



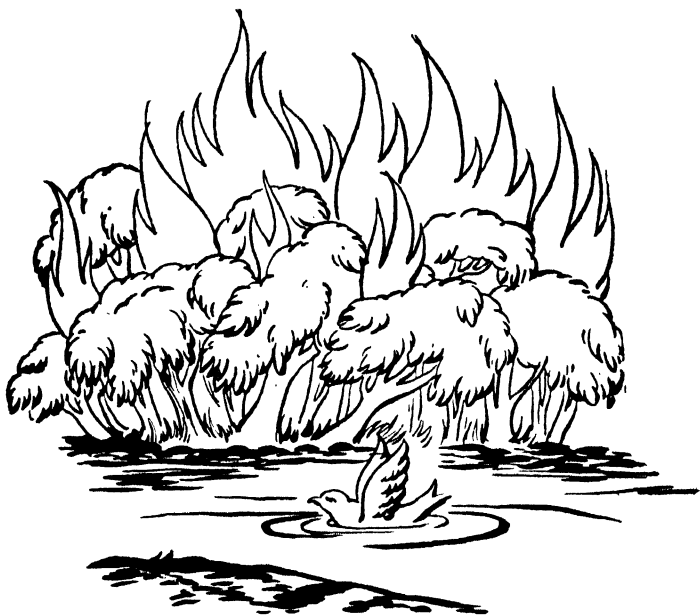
Buddha in his wanderings came to Vaishali. There a dancing girl named Amrapali was residing. The fame of her beauty and art had spread everywhere. Princes, landlords and other rich persons from various parts of the country used to visit her. It is said that she was called Amrapali because she owned a big grove of mango trees. Amrapali was attracted to Buddha. She had not seen him, but had heard many things about

him. She was overjoyed to learn that Buddha was coming to Vaishali. She requested Buddha to stay in her mango grove, and Buddha gladly accepted.

One day she came to see Buddha and had taken every care to make herself attractive and desirable. The disciple at the entrance guessed that she was a courtesan and refused to take her to Buddha. Buddha heard their conversation from within and he called, "Bring her in, Tathagata makes no discrimination. Poor and rich, Brahmin and Shudra, a preacher and a courtesan are all alike in my eyes. Nobody is lowly congenitally."

Amrapali came in. She became astonished to see the lustrous image of Buddha seated in Padmasana. The vulgar thoughts in her mind were dissolved. She bowed and saluted him. She could not think what to say. Buddha realised the confusion in her mind and said, "Please be seated !"

Amrapali's pride was shed. Confidence of the power of her beauty was nowhere. She touched the feet of Buddha and asked for forgiveness; but Buddha said, "You have not done anything which calls for pardon, then why this supplication ? Be calm !" Then Buddha turn-



It began to dip its wings in water and.
ed to his disciples and said, " Bhikshus, there was once a beautiful bird living in a forest and its wings were very attractive. One day that forest caught fire and all animals, like tigers, lions, elephants, jackals and foxes began to run helter-skelter. Seeing this, the bird decided to put the fire out. It began to dip its wings in water and flap them over the fire. Other animals began to laugh, seeing this. All of them ridiculed its futile effort, but the bird did not retract. In

* * * * * *This Courtesan is Pure* * * * *

this struggle, its beautiful wings were burnt and finally the bird itself died of burns ; but the good deed it performed was immortal. The same bird has become Amrapali in this birth. You will be shocked if I say that this Amrapali is of spotless character and of pure mind. But this is a fact. This courtesan is very pure, but many persons believed to be of good character are not so in reality. Purity of character is not decided by a person's appearance or profession.



Buddha took his meals with pleasure.

Amrapali is going to attain Nirvana. I am watching her progress in each of her births."

There was a complete change in Amrapali by this unexpected graciousness of Buddha and learning the mystery of her precious births, she with humility, invited Buddha to her house for dinner. Buddha accepted her invitation. There was a commotion in Vaishali when the news spread that Buddha was going to Amrapali for dinner. Some respectable citizens went to Buddha to ask him personally about it. In order to avoid asking directly, they invited Buddha to dinner on the same day on which Buddha was to go to Amrapali. But Buddha flatly declined. He said, "I have accepted Amrapali's invitation on the same day."

"Who is this Amrapali? That courtesan? And she has invited you?"

No sooner these words left their mouths than Buddha replied in a serious tone of voice,

"Yes, gentlemen, the same mother Amrapali."

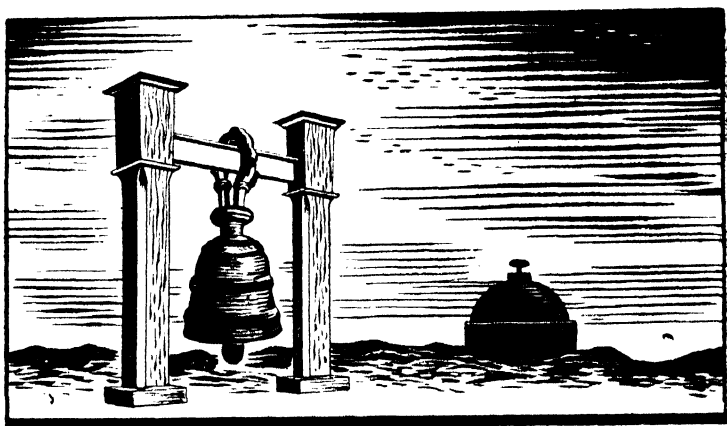
The visitors left crestfallen.

The next day Buddha went to Amrapali. She herself had prepared various articles of food.

* * * * * *Amrapali Becomes a Disciple* * *

Lamps were lighted and artistic designs of white powder were drawn on the floor round the plate. Buddha took his meals with pleasure. As the time came for leaving Amrapali requested Buddha to accept her house for establishing a Vihara, and Buddha agreed. Till the end Amrapali remained the disciple of Buddha.





Ajatashatru's Plot

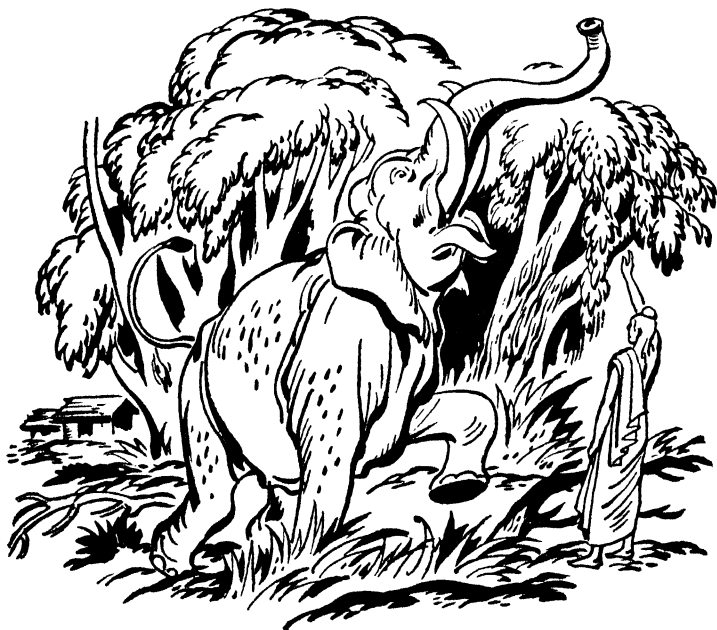


Bimbasar, the emperor of Magadha was a follower of Buddha from the beginning. The king himself and his senior queen Vasavi used to propagate Buddhism. They built many Vihars. The junior queen Chhalana was from the royal family of Lichhavi. She was a near relative of Mahaveer, the Jain Teerthan-kara. Chhalana did not like that the king and his senior queen were propagating Buddha's reli-

gion and had become his followers. She also sulked because the king did not love her as heartily as she desired. Her son, prince Ajatashatru was very insolent and ambitious. Chhalana added fuel to his fire of ambition. She received without any effort the help of Devadatta, the cousin of Buddha. Devadatta had a deep-rooted hatred for Buddha. The trio — Chhalana, Ajatashatru and Devadatta hatched a sinister plot. First of all, Ajatashatru arrested Bimbisar and Vasavidevi and interned them as prisoners. He proclaimed himself as the king in the lifetime of his father. At the bidding of Devadatta, Ajatashatru prohibited Buddha to propagate his religion in Magadha. He issued an order restraining people to attend the discourses of Buddha. Buddha-Vihars were locked. But effect of all this was quite contrary to his expectations. The drum of Buddhism began to resound more loudly. Buddha himself never submitted to the order of Ajatashatru. He said "Tathagata considers all land as his home. Oh prince, you have begun to consider this territory as your own because your vision is clouded. But how can you be the master of this great Magadha when you are not even the master of yourself ?" Ajatashatru got incensed at these words of Buddha. But he

could not openly take arms against Buddha. He had not that courage.

The hatred fuming in the mind of Devadatta decided to take this opportunity. He secretly sent some assassins to Buddha's abode. But a change of their heart came about when they saw the peaceful and lustrous image of Buddha. They threw away the weapons and fell at his feet. By this Devadatta got more furious. He made an elephant drink liquor, chided it and



Buddha raised his right arm calmly.

made it charge Buddha. In the street the elephant crushed everything that came in its way. Now as it was about to make a direct dash towards Buddha, a miracle happened. Buddha, seeing that the elephant was attacking him, raised his right arm calmly. The elephant instantly became pacified. It saluted Buddha by raising its trunk and bowing its head.

Ajatashatru was also restless in his mind. Memory of his parents did not allow him peace. His conscience was constantly pricking him. He used to have nightmares in his sleep regarding his bad deeds. He was suffering the tortures of hell while alive. Finally, his heart decreed that he would not attain peace unless he went to Buddha in submission. The proud Ajatashatru clutched Buddha's feet and drove away Devadatta from his court. Once again Buddha religion got royal patronage in Magadha. Buddha forgave Ajatashatru.

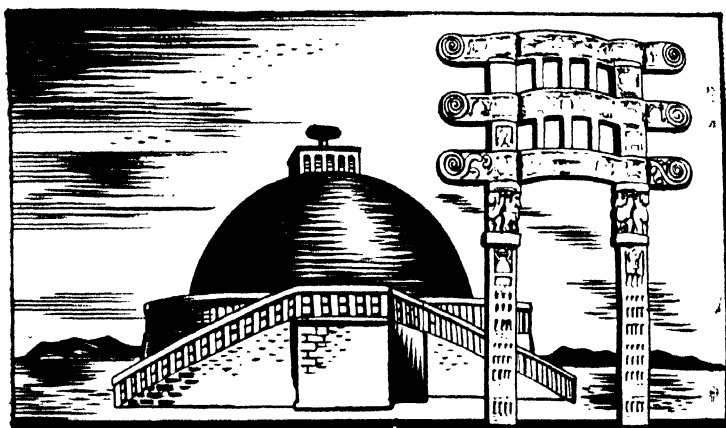
As Devadatta had to suffer defeat from all quarters, he was ashamed, but there was no change in his nature. It is said, that he made a show of submission to Buddha and at the time of touching his feet tried to pierce his foot with the finger nail in which poison was hidden. But Buddha thrust him away with only his big toe. Devadatta fell to the ground staggering. At that very

moment the earth parted with a terrific thunder and Devadatta was swallowed up.

After the change of heart of Ajatashatru and the end of Devadatta, the queen Chhalana also submitted to Buddha. But, by now, there had ensued quarrels among the followers of Buddha himself. Bhikshus used to fly at each other over some insignificant things. Ananda, Sariputta and Mogallan used to bring about peace among them. Sometimes even Buddha himself used to pacify them. But he was very much pained to see this state of his sect even while he was alive.



Devadatta fell to the ground staggering.



Admission of Women



Women were to a great extent responsible for the quarrels that ensued in Buddha-Vihar and making it loose. Some of the female Bhikshus were those who had run away from their fathers' or husbands' houses. Some were devoid of any hope while others were pleasure-seekers. In the beginning, Buddha was against admitting women in his Sangh. But it happened like this :

While on his death-bed the king Shuddho-

dan was constantly thinking of Buddha. Buddha heard by his inner knowledge the call of his father and went immediately to Kapilavastu. The king was lying ill on his bed, muttering, 'Buddha, Buddha.' His eyes were already fixed on the other world. Buddha placed the head of the king on his lap and uttered Dhamma Sutras in his ears. The king was not in a condition to repeat them. But hearing the mantra, lustre returned to his eyes. All the diseases of his body were gone. His sorrow fled. His mind attained peace and he contentedly breathed his last. Buddha bowed and paid his last homage to his dead father and as he was about to return to Rajagaha, the queen Prajapati stopped him.

"Buddha, why do you go leaving us? We also desire to join your Sangh."

"It is not necessary that all should join



Buddha placed the king's head on his lap.

the Sangh. One can attain knowledge also by remaining at one's place. Self-purification is the means of attainment of knowledge. It is not necessary to come into the Sangh for self-purification. Moreover, up to now, we have not admitted any woman in the Sangh" Buddha replied.

Prajapati — "Buddha, are not women entitled to attain knowledge by joining the Sangh ? Haven't they got this liberty ?

Buddha — "Of course, women have got this right and liberty. Dhamma does not differentiate between a man and a woman. But I spoke about the difficulties in daily behaviour. Only for convenience we have not admitted women in the Sangh."

Prajapati — "Buddha, do you think that women will be unable to bear the rigours of the rules of the Sangh? Why do you distrust women? Why this partiality, when there is the ideal example of princess Yashodhara before your eyes ?"

Hearing the arguments of the queen Prajapati, Yashodhara and other ladies, Ananda also took their side and supported them. At that time Buddha reminded him of the conversation he had with Ananda, sometime back.

Once Ananda had asked "Deva, how should

we behave in respect of women ? ”

Buddha had replied “Ananda, avoid their sight.”

Ananda — “ But what should we do if we meet them ? ”

Buddha — “ Do not speak to them.”

Ananda — “ But, if they speak with us ? ”

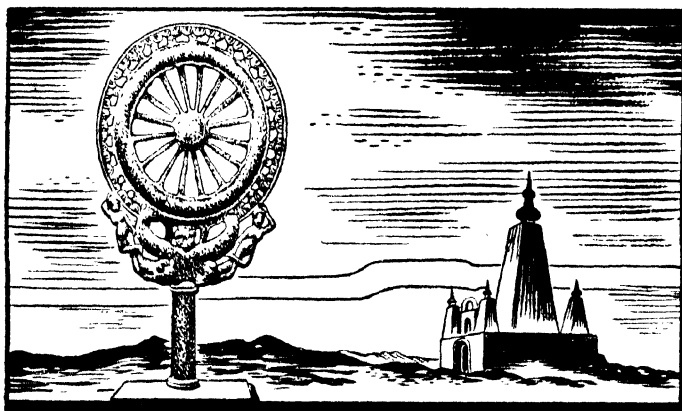
Buddha — “ Be extremely watchful.”

But even after Buddha reminded him of this conversation, Ananda said, “My Lord, at that time I did not agree with this argument and today also I do not agree with it. By refusing admission to women in the Sangh, we are showing that we consider them inferior to men.”

Finally, Buddha admitted Prajapati, Yashodhara and other women in the Sangh. But he said, “ Ananda, had we not admitted women, the Sangh would have lasted for a thousand years. But now it will last only for five hundred years.” Prajapati, Yashodhara and other ladies tried to disprove these words of Buddha. These royal ladies walked barefoot from Kapilavastu to Vaishali. They did not grumble in the least even when their feet were bleeding, their bodies scorched with burning heat and they were distressed with intense thirst and hunger. But as

time passed, many undesirable persons and tendencies entered the Sangh. Women's admission was one of its reasons. But it cannot be gainsaid that wise women like Yashodhara, Kisha Gautami, Dhammamaina also attained spiritual uplift by remaining in the Sangh.





Buddha's Band of Disciples



“Oh Bhikshus, listen, I have attained the knowledge of immortality. I will now tell this to the world, I will teach religion!” Since Buddha made this announcement after his attainment of knowledge, hundreds of disciples had collected around him. Buddha-Vihars were being started at various places. But in this band of disciples, Ananda, Sariputta and Mogallan were his pet disciples. Ananda and Buddha were

like Lakshman and Rama. Ananda was very compassionate by nature and tolerant. His intelligence was not keen enough to understand the niceties of Buddha philosophy. But he had limitless faith in Buddha and he was always following him. At the time of Buddha's death, too, Ananda was near him. Buddha used to tease him often.

Ananda was the cousin of Buddha and Devadatta was also his cousin. But what a difference between their love for Buddha ! In Bouddha religious books there are found many incidents of conversations between Buddha and Ananda. Buddha very often used to express the agonies of his mind to him.

Buddha was a yogi, he had attained knowledge and he had left his family ; but he did not run away from human beings. On the contrary, he was always wandering among the masses of people. He used to touch everybody's life, and sympathise with the sorrow and happiness of the people. Day and night, streams of people used to come to him and he used to take delight in speaking with them, exchanging thoughts while sitting in the throng of people or his disciples. There was current at that time, all over the country, the discussion as to what kind of man

Buddha is, rather than what are the principles of Buddhism. The victory of his religion was mostly the victory of his personality. Pure mind, friendly behaviour, deep pity, handsome features, knack of making a person to think for himself by speaking to him with humility, attracted to him all kinds of people—from ordinary men to princes. Buddha used to treat all alike—from the dancer Amrapali to the emperor Bimbisar.

As Ramayana cannot be told completely without reference to Hanumanta, so also stories about Buddha will be incomplete without Sariputta and Mogallan. Both of them were pet disciples of Buddha. They were Brahmin by caste and well-versed in Veda-Upanishads, Shastras and Puranas. In the beginning they were with a sage named Sanjay. But as they could not attain contentment there, they were wandering about. One day while going about for alms in the morning in the city of Rajagaha (also called Rajgeer or Rajagriha) Sariputta saw a Bhikshu. Sariputta was astonished to see his attire, his behaviour and above all the spiritual lustre of his face. Sariputta approached him and asked him as to who was his Master. The Bhikshu told him "My Master is Shakyamuni (Buddha was also called Shakyamuni). He has found the path

to obtain freedom from birth and death.” Hearing this, Sariputta accompanied him to Buddha. As soon as he saw Buddha his soul told him, “This is the Master. I was wandering about in his search. He who had unconsciously influenced my inner world.” Sariputta went ahead and touched the feet of Buddha, in submission.

The two friends Sariputta and Mogallan had agreed between themselves that if one finds the path of searching for truth first, he should tell it to the other. Sariputta told Mogallan about Buddha and Mogallan also became a disciple of Buddha. Seeing their developed intelligence, learnedness and restraint, Buddha began to pay his special attention to these two. They used to bet among themselves as to of whom the Master is more fond. But Buddha was fond of both of them alike. Both of them used to love the Master and each other intensely. Buddha entrusted to them the spiritual education of his son Rahul.

As regards mutual love, Sariputta and Mogallan were like twin brothers. But there was a vast difference in their appearance. Mogallan was gigantic, very strong and of dark complexion. It is said that once he had shaken the two storeyed building of the Vihara with one kick. He was well-versed in psychology. It is recorded



Mogallan

that he was also an expert in the art of changing the shape of his body as desired and of introducing his soul in different bodies.

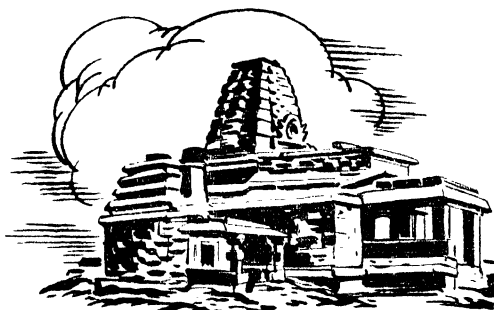
Sariputta was of medium build, fair and learned. He was serious by nature, he used to speak little and gave more attention to meditation. He usually did not mix with others. His intelligence was of first grade and still he was very modest. He did not think below him to sweep the floor of the Vihara. He also gave due importance to the suggestions of the newcomers.

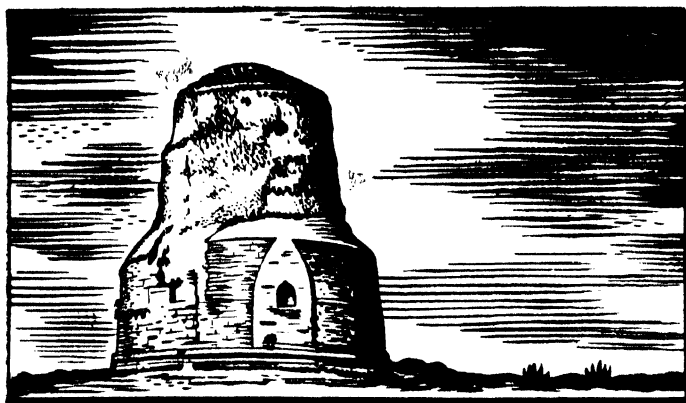
Only a month before the death of Buddha, Sariputta died at his native place Naal. One Bhikshu brought his remains and his yellow robe to Buddha at Savatti. The heart of the great Yogi also became sad for a moment at that time.

Mogallan was murdered by his adversaries. It is said that he escaped six times from the hands of his assassins, on account of his divine power. But at the seventh time when he was off his guard

in the Kalasheel Vihar, he was put to death. This incident happened only two weeks before the death of Buddha. Before his death, in wounded state, Mogallan came to Buddha and breathed his last at the feet of his Master. In this way both the pet disciples of Buddha had left him.

Remains of both of them have been kept in the Bouddha Stoop at Sanchi.





Search of the Soul



Buddha realised that the evening of his life had come. He was eighty years old. His body was a little tired. For the last forty-five years he had been propagating and spreading his new religion day and night. From Nepaltarai to the North of Andhra and Madhya Pradesh to the South the banner of his sect was fluttering. Many princes and kings had joined him in this new religious revolution. The down-trodden peo-

ple used to consider Buddha as their own because he preached that knowledge is not the monopoly of anybody and that no one is lower than the other. The eightfold path put forward by him was the greatest philosophy available to man at that time. On account of this, others also were being attracted to this sect. In human mind there is somewhere a deep-rooted hidden aspiration to belong to somebody or some sect, to establish a relation of loyalty to somebody. How was Bharat at the time of Buddha? Social and political disintegration had set in, in the country. Sparks of conflict were flying. Religious faith of the people was ebbing because of the distorted forms taken by many things like Yadnya, Yaga etc., in Vedic religion. This period was very favourable for the birth of a new faith, a new religion or a new incarnation from the point of view of the mass-mind and the historical situation. Buddha and his principles rose on this wave of time. The importance of Indraprastha and Ayodhya was lessened and the Pataliputra, (Patna of today), became the centre of Bharat.

This new wave of Buddhism released new thoughts. All the human tendencies found the seeds of their development in the sect. The emptiness in life was filled up. Arts of litera-

ture, sculpture etc., began to get encouragement. As time passed, Buddhism made unheard of contributions in these fields. In fact, even today, when we speak about Bharatiya art and culture, we have to speak about Buddhic art and culture. The works of sculpture at Ajanta, Ellora etc., created at the time when Buddhism was prevalent, are immortal. Buddha had realised this development of his religion, while he was alive.

Buddha himself has not written anything. There is no authoritative book of Buddha, like the Vedas, the Upanishads or Bible or Koran, which came afterwards. His sect did not believe in God, nor any religious head like the Pope was appointed. In Buddha's lifetime, of course, he was the supreme authority and the Master. Even as a lamp is lighted by another lamp, his principles were spreading from one heart to another. In course of time, country after country became the follower of Buddha. Even today, one-fourth of the world's population is of this religion.

At the fag-end of his life Buddha used to be always with his disciples. He used to talk much with them. He himself used to ask everybody about his doubts and questions. Once, while

wandering in the Shinshap forest of Koushambi, Buddha took in his hand some leaves of a Shinshap tree and asked his disciples, “ Bhikshus, are these leaves in my hand less or more than the leaves in this forest ? ”

Disciples — “ The leaves in your hand are much less.”

Buddha — “ The same is true of knowledge. This world is full of knowledge. I obtained a handful of it and could give you a little from it. Now you yourselves have to acquire more knowledge. As all other things, knowledge is also relative to an individual. I only indicated as to how you should find out the path of your own uplift. Even though I am a Buddha, Tathagata can do that much only.”

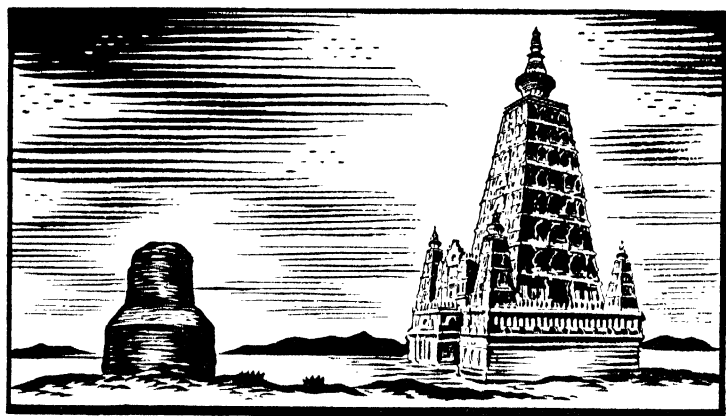
One disciple asked, “ Bhagwan, whom should we consider to be the most revered ? Who is the king of kings ? ”

Buddha replied, “ Oh Bhikshu, Dharma is the greatest of all. He is the king of kings. Everything is included in Dharma. Dharma means the order which pervades this animate and inanimate world, the laws of Nature, the chain of cause and effect. Dharma means truth ; Dharma means justice.”

Another disciple asked, "What is the Soul ?
Who is the master of the Soul ?"

Buddha — "The master of the Soul is the Soul ! Who else can be ? And Soul does not mean shape, emotions, thoughts etc. Even as leaves, flowers, branches etc., are not a tree, the human body and its various sensations are not the Soul ! Soul is the self-created, self-existing and eternal principle. You should yourselves search for the Soul keeping in mind the Sutra "This is not mine, I am not it, it is not I." To search for the Soul is itself our duty."





Memory of the Last Birth



One day in the evening when as usual there had gathered the concourse, Ananda asked, "Bhagwan, you say that life does not begin with birth or does not end with death ; one's present life is only a link and every creature has reached its present state according to his deeds in the previous births and his future birth is decided by his actions in the present birth. You consider that the states of heaven and hell also have an

end. Then how is it that you cannot remember any of your previous births or do not know about the future ? ”

Buddha — “Ananda, you have asked an important question. First thing is that birth and death are but two sides of a single coin. Reason of death is not any disease, accident, or the like ; but birth itself is the reason of death. In this state of cause and effect the soul is always thrown from here to there and from there to here. New birth means only a new state or a new garment. Now, the reason why we cannot remember anything about our previous birth is that our material memory is unable to break through the spiritual layers and bring with it the effects and memories of the past. With the power of the Soul you can know your past or future birth.”

One disciple — “Will you oblige us by telling us something about your previous births ? ”

Buddha laughed a little hearing this, then he became meditative for a moment and said, my disciples, I will narrate to you the account of my previous birth. Perhaps by that you can have some idea about your own elevation.

Two births past I was a monkey. I used to pay attention to the happiness of my relatives. We were living on a big mango tree. This tree

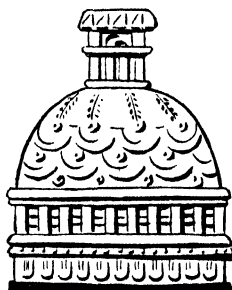
* * * * * *I was a Monkey* * * *

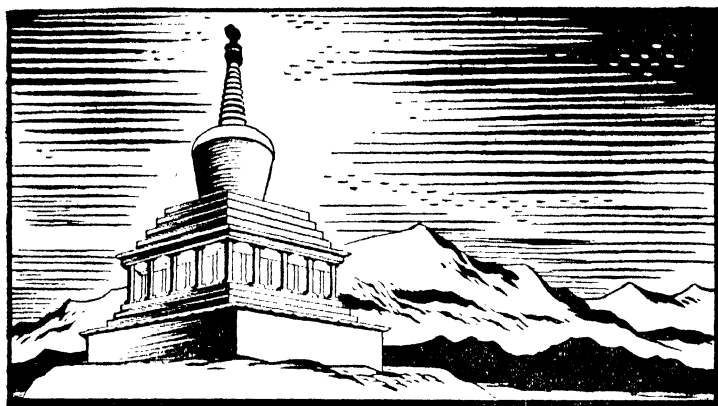
used to bear very sweet fruits. Once one mango fell in the stream of the Ganga and was borne away. It was seen by the king of Kashi who was taking bath. The king was delighted to see the fruit. He began to think as to wherefrom this large and sweet mango had come. He sent his servants upstream for search and he himself started in search of the tree. Finally, they found our tree. Seeing that there were many monkeys sitting in the tree he ordered his servants to kill them by arrows. The monkeys began to tremble with fright, because on one side the servants of the king were standing and on the other side, there was the stream of the Ganga. It was impossible to jump over the river to the other side of the stream. I took a long pole and tried to prepare a bridge across the river, but it fell a little short. Finally I tied the bamboo to my back and stood on one bank. Now the other end of the pole reached the other bank. I told the monkeys to jump and cross the river. One after the other the monkeys reached safety. Some jumped upon me by mistake and my body was being shattered, but I was enduring it. Only one big monkey remained on the tree now. It purposely jumped upon me and reached the other bank ; but I fell dead. Oh, Bhikshus, I tell you today that, that monkey was Devadatta.

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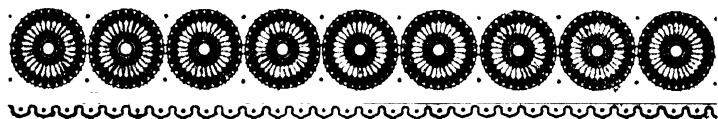
* * * * *Memory of the Last Birth* * * * * *

Then I became a prince. We had one celestial elephant who could bring rain. I gave it away as a gift. Then there was a famine in our kingdom and the people got incensed at my excessive generosity. Myself and my family were exterminated. While we were crossing a desert enduring many miseries, on the way again I met some beggars, and I gave them everything I had with me. Finally, I gave away even my wife and my children and fell dead in the desert itself. In the next birth I was living as Bodhisattva (future Buddha). The present birth is my last birth !”





Be an Island in the Ocean of this World



Buddha was now eighty years old. For forty-five years he had been wandering incessantly in every nook and corner of the country. But now his body became weak. Ananda had become very anxious, because now Buddha felt tired after a journey.

He said one day to Buddha, "My Lord, what will happen to Dharma after you? Give us some message."

Buddha became serious at these words. He paused for a moment and then said, "Ananda, how can he be a Buddha who believes that he will always show a way to the world, give a message for the future generation? My days in this world are numbered. It is true that after that I will go away from you. I will go to Nirvana exactly after three months from today."

The earth trembled as soon as Buddha uttered these words, because that great man had himself announced the date of his end in this world. Tears welled up in the eyes of Ananda. Seeing this, Buddha said,

"Ananda, there is nothing in it which calls for weeping. All the animate and inanimate things in this world are transitory. Every moment there is a change in them. Even the mountains are changing particle by particle. The wheel of birth, development, disintegration and destruction or death is applicable to all. The reason of death is not disease, but birth is the reason of death. Birth means sorrow and death also means sorrow! I taught you one thing and that is, sorrow and the destruction of sorrow. Joy is also another phase of sorrow. Birth and death is the greatest sorrow in this world. The way to escape from it is the attainment of know-

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ledge. But how this attainment is to be brought about? Ananda, in this worldly ocean you yourselves should be your own places of shelter — islands. Shelter from outside is not of any use. Take shelter of the Soul, the Dharma and the truth.”

Buddha and his disciples in their wanderings came to the village of one disciple by name Chund, who was a blacksmith. Chund asked Buddha to take food in his house. Buddha ate with delight the rice and pig’s meat cooked by him, but he asked Chund to bury the remaining food without giving it to any body. Some infer from this that the meat was very bad or not properly cooked.

While returning from Chund’s house, Buddha began to feel uneasy on the way. He said, “Ananda, you go ahead; on the way you will see two Saal trees; prepare my bed there. Keep the pillow to the north.” He sat down after giving this order. The heart of Ananda began to palpitate. His legs could not move, but somehow he started.

After some time Buddha, along with his other disciples, reached the spot and threw himself on the bed. Even though it was not spring, there was a perfume of flowers in the air. The heat of

* * * * *Be an Island in the Ocean of this World* * *

the sun had ended and there was a kind of silence in nature. For a moment, Buddha rested with his eyes closed and then called his disciples near him. "Has any one of you any doubt ?" He asked.

One disciple made himself bold to ask, "Bhagwan, what is Nirvana ?"

Buddha replied "Nirvana is a territory in which there is no earth, no water, no light, no air, no sky, no directions, no time, no consciousness, no emptiness. There is nothing like even moon or sun, planets or stars, this world or other world, birth or death—nothing. In this territory there is the end of sorrow, final truth and eternity. But it is not possible to describe Nirvana. It is not Nirvana which can be imagined. Nirvana is beyond all ideas, beyond all logic. It is desirable to keep silent about the revelation of such greatest truth."

Other disciple — "But is there anything beyond Nirvana ?"

Buddha — "No thing or idea is final. Nirvana is also not final. Beyond that there is Mahaparinirvana and beyond that also there is something else.

"In practical language it can be said that Nirvana means the end of greed, hate and temptation and the greatest peace of mind !"

* * * * * **Keep Faith in Dhamma** * * * *

Saying this, Buddha closed his eyes. He went in a trance. His last words were, "My dear disciples, I am going, but you should not become sad on account of that. Do not be afraid. Propagate the eightfold path of morality. All things are destined to perish. Attain your own salvation consciously. Keep faith in 'Dhamma'."

After that Buddha went to Nirvana. Peace pervaded everywhere. This incident occurred near Kushinar, 120 miles from Kashi. Both the birth and Nirvana of Buddha happened on the lap of nature, in the shadow of trees.

There are differences of opinion regarding the year of Buddha's Nirvana. Learned men like Max Muller say that it occurred in 447 B.C. But now most of the historians believe that 483 B.C. is the year of Buddha's Nirvana.



Buddha closed his eyes. He went in a trance.

“Whatever is born and is existing, contains the seeds of its destruction and its end is inevitable. This worldly body of Buddha will also now be assimilated in the five great elements. Oh Bhikshus, control your grief as told you by the Lord. Acclaim Buddha, the Sangh and the Dhamma.” On hearing these words of Aniruddha, the oldest of the Bhikshus, Ananda and all others controlled their grief. After seven days Buddha’s body was cremated. The ashes were distributed in ten parts. In course of time at various places big stoopas and pagodas were built and the mortal remains of Buddha were kept in them preserved. Lumbini forest—Buddha’s birth-place, Kushinera—his place of Nirvana, Buddhagaya—his place of attainment of knowledge, Saranath—the place of his first discourse and Sanchi—the place where the remains of Sariputta and Mogallan are preserved, have now become the places of pilgrimage in India.

The waves of Buddha’s teaching are spreading all over the world today, even after twenty-five hundred years have passed. Buddhism is constantly spreading without any kind of religious fanaticism, support of military strength or any organised effort. In a country like Bharat, Buddhism was assimilated in Hindu religion it-

* * * * * **Tribute to Buddha** * * *

self and thereby Hindu religion became richer. In China, Buddhism added lustre to the Tao, Confucian religion. In many countries Buddhism ushered in a new era in the fields of culture and art. In political field today, Buddha's moral principles are coming from individual plane to the international plane in the form of 'Panchashila' in opposition to the Hydrogen bomb. What other more joyful development can there be on the eve of the 25th birth centenary of Buddha ?



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